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# WRITING AND FILMING THE PAINTING: EKPHRASIS IN LITERATURE AND FILM

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# Writing and Filming the Painting:
# Ekphrasis in Literature and Film

**by**

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# Dedication

Für meine Eltern Peter und Else-Maria Sager,

meinen Mann Ivan Eidt,

und unseren Kater Strohmian

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This dissertation compares literary texts and films in which with works of art play a mayor role. Literary texts about works of art are today called "ekphrasis." However, the concept has not yet been applied to films about art. Comparing filmic treatments of paintings by three well-known painters (Goya, Rembrandt, and Vermeer) with ekphrases in literary texts, I examine how the medium of ekphrasis (i.e. literary or filmic) affects the representation of the visual arts in order to show what the differences imply about issues such as gender roles, and the function of art for the construction of a personal and/or social identity.

After developing a framework of four types of ekphrasis with increasing degrees of complexity, which I call attributive, depictive, interpretive, and dramatic ekphrasis, I apply my expanded definition of ekphrasis as an interpretive tool, in order to demonstrate how different genres in either modality influence the way the reader or viewer reconstructs the implications of a work of art. In so doing, I show that literary and filmic ekphrases have a similar underlying agenda – they are both closely connected to the *paragone*, the rivalry of the arts – but often different social dynamics: While the literary texts tend to use ekphrasis to underscore the personal function of art, the films generally emphasize art's involvement in socio-political contexts. In other words, in both the texts and the films, ekphrasis is formally linked to the competition between the arts; yet, thematically the literary texts generally focus more on identity issues, whereas the films tend to be more interested in how art is related to the social, public roles of individuals. In my conclusion, I discuss the audience-related function of ekphrasis in film, as either cerebral or affective, which distinguished it from literary ekphrasis.

# Table of Contents

# Chapter 1: Toward a Definition of Ekphrasis in Literature and Film

## INTRODUCTION

The classical figure of ekphrasis has become an increasingly popular critical concept in recent years. A keyword search on the MLA international bibliography results in 468 articles, book chapters, books, and dissertations, of which 177 were published in the last five years. Whereas traditionally ekphrasis was confined to poems that describe or analyze works of art, it is now generally accepted and used as a term that applies to all literary genres, that is, novel, drama, as well as essay. In spite of the expansion and popularity of this concept, however, it has not yet been applied to film. In the pages to follow I will contend that the concept of ekphrasis is applicable to film as well. Moreover, I will argue that ekphrasis can function as a useful tool to explore many of the issues at heart in the relationship between words and images which are central to the filmic discourse and the hybrid nature of the cinematic medium.

The term ekphrasis is generally used to refer to works of poetry and prose that talk about or incorporate visual works of art. Definitions of ekphrasis, then, have been anchored traditionally in a particular modality: verbal discourses that directly verbalize one or more visual images, often discussed in terms of a power struggle between author and painter. Film's relationship with painting, although never discussed in terms of ekphrasis, has similarly been seen in terms of a competition: critics have traditionally rejected film's ability to do justice to art

works and have accused film of not being true to the painting, of fragmenting it.[1] As I will show in this chapter as I outline the historical evolution of ekphrasis and current research on film-painting relationships, similar issues are at play in the relationships between literary texts and paintings, and films and paintings, but this connection has so far not been explored. This dissertation investigates that missing dimension.

Whereas heretofore theorists have used ekphrasis to talk about the visual arts in poetry and prose, they have not identified the relationship between film and painting, or the triad of painting, novel and film, as similarly informed by an "ekphrastic ambition"[2] and the ways in which the resultant sender/receiver relationships reshape the reader or viewer perceptions of the artworks depicted. These relationships alter the social power and impact of the depicted art for the reader or viewer. In the chapters that follow I compare the verbal and visual characteristics of film and literary genres that depict art. By applying my expanded definition of ekphrasis as an interpretive tool, I demonstrate how different genres in either modality influence the way the reader or viewer reconstructs the implications of a work of art. In my conclusion I will suggest why, in the age of information and media influence, it becomes increasingly important to think beyond the traditional boundaries between visual and verbal

[1] André Bazin takes up this criticism and argues against it in his "Painting and Cinema," *What is Cinema?* Trans. by Hugh Gray (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1967), esp. 164-6.
[2] Murray Krieger uses this term to describe the desire of the literary arts to "overcome the arbitrariness of the verbal sign by aping the natural sign of the visual arts." *Ekphrasis: The Illusion of the Natural Sign* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1992) 14.

arts as well as between academic disciplines, and I discuss the reason for what could be called critic's "ekphrastic fear" in films.[3]

## THE AESTHETICS OF EKPHRASIS

The Western discourse on ekphrasis has largely "developed under the auspices of Horace's comparison 'ut pictura poesis'," [4] a phrase which has often been misunderstood as an imperative rather than a comparison between the production of visual representations in poetry and in painting. A century after Horace, Plutarch cites a phrase by the 6th-century BCE writer, Simonide of Keos, that takes the comparison even further: "painting is mute poetry and poetry is a speaking picture."[5] Comparisons between poetry and painting are also made in Plato's *Republic* (Book X, 605) and Aristotle's *Poetics* (9.16-21). Plato banned all mimetic art from his *Republic*, because it makes "phantoms that are very far removed from the truth," and is thus harmful to the soul.[6] Rescuing mimetic art from Plato's attack, Aristotle develops the parallel between poetry and painting further. He emphasizes that the object of both arts is the imitation of human

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[3] W.J.T. Mitchell discusses this term as critics' resistance against ekphrasis and its collapsing of the border between visual and verbal mediation in his "Ekphrasis and the Other," *Picture Theory* (Chicago and London: The U of Chicago P, 1994) 154-56. Applied to film, I use this term to describe the resistance to ekphrasis and desire for purity in the two visual genres film and painting.

[4] Antonella Braida, and Giuliana Pieri, introduction, *Image and Word: Reflections of Art and literature from the Middle Ages to the Present*. (Oxford: European Humanities Research Centre, 2003) 3

[5] Henryk Markiewicz, "Ut Pictura Poesis: A History of the Topos and the Problem," *New Literary History* 18.3 (1987): 535.

[6] *The Republic of Plato*, ed., transl., and introd. by Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968) 289.

nature in action, but their means are different: Poetry uses language, rhythm and harmony, while painting uses color and form (Braida and Pieri 2).

Plato's followers have, for centuries, emphasized the "inferiority" of words to images with regard to their mimetic faithfulness of representation.[7] The rhetorical device of *enargeia* was thus a regular scholastic exercise of using words to create such a vivid, visual description that the object is placed before the listener's or reader's inner eye.[8] *Enargeia* also encompassed *ekphrasis* as a form of vivid evocation. Used as a rhetorical device, ekphrasis was defined in terms of its effect on an audience by Theon as "expository speech which vividly brings the subject before our eyes."[9] Like *enargeia*, ekphrasis marks the desire to overcome the arbitrariness of the verbal sign by aspiring to the natural sign of the visual arts (cf. Krieger 10-12). One of the earliest and most famous examples of literary ekphrasis is Homer's description of Achilles' shield in book 18 of the *Iliad*, in which ekphrasis functions as a device to make the listeners re-create the shield in their minds' eyes.

During the Middle Ages, the "ut pictura poesis" formula remained popular, but its terms of comparison began to shift. Writers such as Augustine emphasized the greater difficulty of the reception of poetry, which made it more valuable than painting. Moreover, writing was also considered to be more capable of encompassing spiritual matters, and thus to have "greater moral and religious

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[7] Murray Krieger, *Ekphrasis: The Illusion of the Natural Sign* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1992) 14

[8] Cf. Jean H. Hagstrum, *The Sister Arts: The Tradition of Literary Pictorialism and English Poetry from Dryden to Gra*y (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1958) 29; Krieger 14.

[9] William H. Race, "Ekphrasis," *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, eds. Alex Preminger and T.V.F. Brogan (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1993) 320.

value" than painting, and to offer "more lasting satisfaction" (Markiewicz 537). This devaluation of painting is also reflected in its absence from the seven liberal arts, which consisted of the trivium (grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic), and the quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music). Painting and sculpture were considered manual rather than intellectual labor and therefore classified with the mechanical arts. In the centuries that followed, painters and sculptors struggled to combat their status as artisans and imitators, rather than artists and creators, and to reaffirm the intellectual nature of their work.

One of the first to counter that hierarchy was Leon Battista Alberti, whose treatise on art, *Della Pittura* (1435), reasserts the painter's primacy, as it is he who excites the imagination the most (cf. Braida and Pieri 5). Since Alberti, this contest for the representational superiority between the sister arts is know as *paragone*. In the Renaissance, it was Leonardo da Vinci who reclaimed the prominent place of the visual arts the most fervently in his *Paragone* (ca. 1510), reversing Simonides' comparison by claiming that if painting is "mute poetry," then poetry is "blind painting."[10] While Leonardo sought to prove the superiority of the visual arts over poetry, Lessing, in his *Laokoon* (1766), attempts to reverse that hierarchy by drawing strict boundaries between the representational realms of poetry and painting. Whereas poetry is best suited to represent actions in time due to the temporal nature of its reception, painting can only represent a single pregnant moment in space since it is perceived as a static object. In other words, Lessing distinguishes the creation of mental images in time from the static nature

[10] Leonardo da Vinci, *Leonardo da Vinci's Paragone: Critical Interpretation with a new Edition of the Text in the Codex Urbinas*, ed. Claire J. Farago (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992) 209.

of the physical painting. Because of its ability to excite mental pictures in a temporal sequence, poetry is better able to create an illusion of reality. Thus, although strongly opposed to ekphrasis because of its mingling of painting and poetry, he nevertheless espouses the energetic creation of visual images through language.[11]

Lessing's notions of time and space have remained fundamental to the analysis of ekphrasis to this day.[12] For example, Murray Krieger's Ekphrasis*: The Illusion of the Natural Sign* (1992) defines ekphrasis as a device to "interrupt the temporality of discourse, to freeze it during its indulgence in spatial exploration" (7) and his concept of the "ekphrastic principle" includes those poems which seek to emulate the pictorial or sculptural arts by achieving a kind of spatiality. But while e*kphrasis* for the Greeks implied a visual impact on the mind's eye of the listener, today the real or fictional art object itself is the occasion for the poem, which seeks to render that visual object into words. Thus, ekphrasis today is generally defined as "verbal representation of a visual representation."[13]

This twentieth-century usage was coined by Leo Spitzer in 1955 in an analysis of Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn." There he defined ekphrasis as "the poetic description of a pictorial or sculptural work of art, which description implies, in the words of Théophile Gautier, 'une transposition d'art', the reproduction through the medium of words of sensuously perceptible *objets d'art*

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[11] Alexandra Wettlaufer, *In the Mind's Eye: The Visual Impulse in Diderot, Baudelaire and Ruskin* (New York and Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003) 64-66.
[12] Cf. W.J.T. Mitchell, "Space and Time: Lessing's *Laokoon* and the Politics of Genre," *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology* (Chicago and London: U of Chicago P, 1986) 97.
[13] James A. W. Heffernan, *Museum of Words: The Poetics of Ekphrasis from Homer to Ashbery* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993) 3.

(*ut pictura poesis*)."[14] But inter-art comparisons, that is, comparisons between the arts, had already interested René Wellek, who, in an article in 1941 discusses "The Parallelism between Literature and the Visual Arts."[15] His position is largely a warning against going too far with analogies between the arts and against the confusion of the arts by a simple transference of terms from one art to another. Instead, he argues, critics should look for structural relationships and make use of semiology and their concepts of signs, norms and values in inter-art comparisons.

Similar cautions against generalizations and calls for factually grounded structural relationships continued to concern critics throughout the seventies and eighties. In "Art and Literature: A Plea for Humility" (1972) Jean Seznec emphasizes the need for a factual method which looks for actual contacts between art and literature, and pleads for monographic studies of precise, fully documented relationships.[16] Likewise, Ulrich Weisstein in his chapter on "Literature and the Visual Arts" in the first MLA publication dedicated to *Interrelations of Literature* (1982), is primarily concerned with guidelines to make valid inter-art comparisons. Like Seznec, he calls for monographic studies, limited in object and rigorous in form with a precise and narrow choice of topic, and "conducted in a controlled environment" in order to avoid vast syntheses and generalizations.[17] In the same year, Wendy Steiner published *The Colors of*

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[14] Leo Spitzer, "The 'Ode on a Grecian Urn,' or Content vs. Metagrammar," *Comparative Literature* 7.3 (1955): 207.
[15] René Wellek, "The Parallelism between Literature and the Visual Arts," *English Institute Annual* (New York: Columbia UP, 1941) 29-63.
[16] Jean Seznec, "Art and Literature: A Plea for Humility," *New Literary History* 3.3 (1972): 571-74.
[17] Ulrich Weisstein, "Literature and the Visual Arts," *Interrelations of Literature,* ed. Baricelli and Gibaldi (New York: MLA, 1982) 267.

*Rhetoric*, in which she proposes and illustrates a structuralist method of inter-art comparisons that seeks parallels while being aware of impossibilities of structural correspondences. Similar to Murray Krieger, Steiner defines ekphrasis as a description of a "pregnant moment in painting," that is as attempt to imitate the visual arts by describing a still moment and thereby halting time.[18]

## EKPHRASIS AND IDEOLOGY

Whereas these critics have discussed the literature-art relationship largely as an aesthetic one, critics from the late eighties on have tended to see the relationship as socially and ideologically motivated, as a "dialectical struggle in which the opposed terms take on different ideological roles and relationships at different moments in history" (Mitchell, "Space" 98). W.J.T. Mitchell was one of the first to discuss inter-art comparisons in terms of social relations. By showing how Lessing in his *Laokoon* connects the difference between painting and poetry to that between men and women and the English and the French influence, Mitchell demonstrates how Lessing's attempt to establish laws and borders to distinguish the arts is permeated by a rhetoric of political economy and social, gender relations. The laws of genre not only shift into laws of proper behavior for each gender, but moreover function to segregate the arts in "an imperialist design for absorption by the more dominant, expansive art" ("Space" 107).

[18] Wendy Steiner, *The Colors of Rhetoric* (Chicago and London: U of Chicago P, 1982) 41.

Similarly, Ernest B. Gilman has discussed this "Imperialism of Language" as central to inter-art comparisons since Antiquity, emphasizing that the paragone, or the rivalry between the arts, exists not only between the disciplines, but also between their academic exponents, art historians and literary critics. Alluding to the commonplace of painting as mute poetry and poetry as speaking picture, he concludes that "[i]f the image lurks in the heart of language as its unspeakable other, then critics should be open to the possibility that images harbor a similarly charged connection with language – as an invisible other."[19] Likewise, Grant F. Scott discusses ekphrasis as appropriation of the "visual other" and as an attempt to "transform and master the image by inscribing it."[20] Diverging from critics such as Jean Hagstrum, Leo Spitzer and Murray Krieger, who see ekphrasis as "imitation" of the visual arts, or as "giving voice" to the image, Scott sees it as "a means of […] demonstrating dominance and power" (303).

Specifically, for critics such as Mitchell and Heffernan, this battle is often played out in terms of race and gender. Ekphrastic texts project the visual as "other to language."[21] In this process of cultural domination, "the self is understood to be an active, speaking, seeing subject, while the 'other' is projected as a passive, seen, and (usually) silent object. […] Like the masses, the colonized, the powerless and voiceless everywhere, visual representation cannot represent itself; it must be represented by discourse" (157). The "other" art is thus defined

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[19] Ernest B. Gilman, "Interart Studies and the 'Imperialism' of Language," *Art and Literature I,* ed. Wendy Steiner, spec. issue of *Poetics Today* 10.1 (1989): 23.
[20] Grant F. Scott, "The Rhetoric of Dilation: Ekphrasis and Ideology," *Word & Image* 7.4 (1991): 302.
[21] W.J.T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago and London: U of Chicago P, 1994) 163.

both in terms of racial otherness as the seen vs. the unmarked identity, and in terms of gender as the "expression of a duel between male and female gazes" (Heffernan 1).

Despite these ideological battles, Mitchell has argued that there is no essential difference between the two arts.[22] In other words, neither are the visual arts "inherently spatial, static, corporeal, and shapely," nor are "arguments, addresses, ideas, and narratives" proper to language. Although the visual and verbal media are different "at the level of sign-types, forms, materials of representation, and institutional traditions" (*Picture* 161), Mitchell emphasizes that semantically, that is, in terms of "expressing intentions and producing effects in a viewer/listener, there is no essential difference between texts and images" (ibid. 160). Thus, in contrast to the restrictive, cautionary warnings of earlier critics, for Mitchell "the problem is that we have not gone nearly far enough in our exploration of text-image relations" ("Going Too Far" 2). The emphasis has thus not only shifted from an aesthetic to a social focus, but also from moderation to encouragement and excess.

However, as Bernhard F. Scholz has shown, the problem today is that there is also an excess of definitions, and that the concept of ekphrasis refers to a range of practices rather than to a distinct corpus or genre of texts. Ekphrasis has been variously defined as a rhetorical figure, that is, in terms of its effect on the listener; as a rhetorical exercise, that is, "as a term for a (descriptive) genre

[22] "Space" 98; *Picture* 159-62; and "Going Too Far With The Sister Arts," *Space, Time, Image, Sign: Essays on Literature and the Visual Arts*, ed. James A.W. Heffernan (New York: Peter Lang, 1987) 1-10.

studied in terms of composition and typical subject matter";[23] as a literary genre, "defined by reference to form and/or subject matter" (73); a macrostructure, "defined in syntactic terms and in terms of the materials which are ordered by the macrostructure" (74), like "plot" or "collage"; as an intertextual relation, "defined by its characteristic relation to another text"; or broadly as a mode of writing, "to be contrasted with 'description', 'argumentation' or 'dialogue'" (74). Each of these possibilities will lead critics to emphasize different features and functions of ekphrasis. In light of this absence of consensus about what constitutes the genre of ekphrasis and how it is to be distinguished from other similar phenomena, Scholz concludes that it might be more fruitful to see it "as complex multi-dimensional multi-faceted semiotic phenomenon," as a "term with a 'family of meanings' with each member of that family calling for a separate definition" (75).

## EXPANDING THE DEFINITION OF EKPHRASIS

In fact, as Claus Clüver has argued, "contemporary ekphrastic practices have subverted the traditional relation of the representational visual text to its verbal representation, even to the point of discontinuity."[24] Thus, critics have felt the need to redefine the concept of ekphrasis, for its general definition as "verbal representation of visual representation" has been increasingly perceived as too narrow. Margaret Persin in her book on ekphrasis in 20th-century Spanish poetry

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[23] Bernhard F. Scholz., "'*Sub Oculos Subiectio'*: Quintilian on Ekphrasis and Enargeia," *Pictures into Words: Theoretical and Descriptive Approaches to Ekphrasis*, eds. Valerie Robillard and Els Jongeneel (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1998) 73.

[24] Claus Clüver, "Ekphrasis Reconsidered: On Verbal Representations of Non-Verbal Texts," *Interart Poetics: Essays on the Interrelations of the Arts and Media*, ed. Ulla-Britta Lagerroth, Hans Lund, and Erik Hedling (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 1997) 30.

(1997) has expanded the range of ekphrastic objects, discussing not only poems about paintings but also about "uncanonical art forms such as television, photography, comics, and cinematography."[25] In the same year, Claus Clüver proposes a yet more "radical revision of the concept that would lead to a considerable extension" ("Ekphrasis" 23). This extension consists not only in broadening the definition to include as the object of ekphrasis any discourse composed in a non-verbal sign system, but moreover, his proposal implies that ekphrasis would also include both the tableau vivant and theatricalization (26), two terms eminently relevant for the notion of filmic ekphrasis.

Having expanded the second part of the ekphrastic equation, Clüver proceeds to revise the first part a year later. Rather than "verbal representation" he argues for the term "verbalization" which is less tied to mimesis than the traditional term, yet retains a certain degree of *enargeia* inherent in and central to ekphrasis.[26] Thus, he defines the concept as "the verbalization of real or fictitious texts composed in a non-verbal sign system" (49). Likewise, Tamar Yacobi has shown in various essays that ekphrasis can include a mere allusion to an "ekphrastic model" or an "ekphrastic simile" of no more than one phrase.[27] Both generally invoke a pictorial model rather than a specific painting (such as *a* Last

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[25] Margaret Persin, *Getting the Picture: The Ekphrastic Principle in Twentieth-Century Spanish Poetry* (Lewisburg: Bucknell UP; London: Associated UP, 1997) 19.

[26] Claus Clüver, "Quotation, Enargeia, and the Function of Ekphrasis," *Pictures into Words: Theoretical and Descriptive Approaches to Ekphrasis*, eds. Valerie Robillard and Els Jongeneel (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1998) 45.

[27] Tamar Yacobi, "The Ekphrastic Model: Forms and Functions," *Pictures into Words: Theoretical and Descriptive Approaches to Ekphrasis*, eds. Valerie Robillard and Els Jongeneel (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1998) 21-34; "Verbal Frames and Ekphrastic Figuration," *Interart Poetics: Essays on the Interrelations of the Arts and Media*, ed. Ulla-Britta Lagerroth, Hans Lund, and Erik Hedling (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 1997) 35-46.

Supper, *a* Crucifixion), but produce multiple interconnections and cross-references. They thus function as "abbreviated reference to a whole pictorial set of works, which silently refers the reader to the original itself for details and extensions" ("Verbal" 42).

The most radical re-definition, and most significant one for my purposes, has been proposed in 2000 by Siglind Bruhn in her book on *Musical Ekphrasis* and an article based on the introduction of that book a year later.[28] She expands Clüver's definition of ekphrasis to refer to the "representation in one medium of a real or fictitious text composed in another medium" (*Musical* 8; "Concert" 559). Musical ekphrasis can thus transpose either a painting or a literary text, and the individual studies in her book are in fact devoted to both cases. Bruhn's re-definition is particularly relevant since it contends that the "recreating medium need not always be verbal, but can itself be any of the art forms other than the one in which the primary 'text' is cast" (*Musical* 7-8). In a footnote, she points out that Claus Clüver, in his article "On Intersemiotic Transposition" has interpreted Charles Demuth's painting *I Saw the Figure Five in Gold* as intersemiotic transposition of William Carlos William's poem "The Great Figure."[29] Not only do the third and fourth lines of the poem provide the title of the painting, but the painting does in fact transpose the poem, including its past tense, into pictorial language. Wendy Steiner, in *Pictures of Romance* provides another example of

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[28] Siglind Bruhn, *Musical Ekphrasis: Composers Responding to Poetry and Painting* (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2000) and "A Concert of Paintings: Musical Ekphrasis in the 20th Century," *Poetics Today* 22:3 (2001): 551-605.

[29] Claus Clüver, "On Intersemiotic Transposition," *Art and Literature I,* ed. Wendy Steiner, spec. issue of *Poetics Today* 10.1 (1989): 55-90.

the way in which a work of art transposes a novel.[30] All of these, as Bruhn emphasizes, are cases of "visual representation of verbal representation" (*Musical* 8), thus reversing Heffernan's well-known definition of ekphrasis.

## THE CASE FOR CINEMATIC EKPHRASIS

In spite of these attempts to broaden the concept of ekphrasis, the term has not yet been applied to film as a medium that can transpose a painting. However, one need not go as far as Bruhn's re-definition to allow for the possibility of visual or filmic ekphrasis. Clüver's above-cited definition of ekphrasis as "the verbalization of real or fictitious texts composed in a non-verbal sign system" would apply equally to poetic ekphrasis as to an ekphrastic passage in the stage directions of a drama or in a screenplay. Elizabeth Drumm in her discussion of "Ekphrasis in Valle-Inclan's *Comedias bárbaras*" has shown how ekphrasis is used in the stage directions of that drama. Although the ekphrasis is a mere reference to some vague, unidentified "retratos antiguos" (old portraits), the trilogy as a whole functions as "prolonged ekphrasis of the mute art object."[31] Moreover, ekphrasis in this drama does not privilege language, but rather the "rich ambiguity" and the "persistent and inscrutable presence" of the visual image (393).

Ekphrastic passages in such texts as dramas and screenplays will be acted out and dramatized, and thus lose their purely verbal nature. But will they then

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[30] Wendy Steiner, *Pictures of Romance: Form Against Context in Painting and Literature*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988) 109.
[31] Elizabeth Drumm, "Ekphrasis in Valle-Inclán's *Comedias bárbaras*," *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos* 34.2 (2000): 391.

also lose their potential to be ekphrastic? I would like to extend and combine Clüver's and Bruhn's above-mentioned definitions of ekphrasis to explicitly include the *quotation and dramatization* of texts in another medium to expand the possibilities of visual and cinematographic ekphrasis.[32] I therefore define ekphrasis as *the verbalization, quotation, or dramatization of real or fictitious texts composed in another sign system*.

Like Bruhn, then, I argue that ekphrasis need not be purely verbal. If the goal of verbal ekphrasis is to make the reader see, cinematic ekphrasis can also be discussed in terms of its effect on the audience. Filmic ekphrasis allows the viewer to compare the filmic representation or enactment of the art work with the actual work itself, thus creating a synthesis of the two images in the viewer's mind. With this audience-oriented goal, ekphrasis is closely tied to reception. But not only does ekphrasis strive for a creative visual effect on the audience, but moreover, it also indicates the writer's or filmmaker's interpretation, and thus reception of a work of art or an artist's oeuvre. As Gisbert Kranz has noted with regard to the ekphrastic poem and in reference to Roman Ingaarden, it is a "concretization of the work of art," a concretization which comprises both the effect produced by the work of art and the reception by the recipient.[33] Analyzing the literary and filmic reception and concretization of a work of art through their

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[32] However, as Clüver has emphasized with regard to ekphrasis of architecture, the existence of ekphrasis in a discourse depends both on how the object is represented, that is, as another representation or merely as object, and on the reception of its representation ("Ekphrasis Reconsidered" 26). Thus, it would be important to distinguish between films that merely show some art works and those in which they fulfill a narrative function.

[33] Gisbert Kranz, *Das Bildgedicht. Theorie – Lexikon – Bilbiographie*, vol. 1 (Köln and Wien [Cologne and Vienna]: Böhlau Verlag, 1981) 158.

ekphrases, we can gain insight into the similarities and differences in the interpretation of famous works of art in high and in popular culture.

For this ekphrastic process, this concretization, I prefer to use Bruhn's term "transmedialization," which she coins by referring to the existence of the adjective "-medial" in German as well as French (*Musical* 51). Having shown how other terms suggested by literary critics for the ekphrastic process, such as transposition, transformation, or translation, invite misreadings and possess music-specific meanings, she proposes this term as one that adequately captures the essence of that process. While this term seems to convey the same meaning as Clüver's "intersemiotic transposition" (translation or transmutation), I find "transmedialization" both simpler and more precise. Moreover, its English usage is prefigured in terms such as "intermedial" and "intermediality."[34]

My own reading of films in the light of the ekphrastic process has benefited from Siglind Bruhn's analysis of musical ekphrasis, Claus Clüver's various expansions of literary ekphrasis, and Donna L. Poulton's discussion of the uses of art in film. None of these investigations, however, touches on the ability of film to transmedialize a work of art by adapting the pictorial into the cinematographic language. In fact, although there are a number of studies on film-painting relationships, none has investigated the possibility of filmic ekphrasis. However, one does not need to go as far as Zahlten and claim that the discourse

[34] See for example the publication *Icons – Texts – Iconotexts: Essays on Ekphrasis and Intermediality*, ed. Peter Wagner (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1996). The terms "intermedial" and "intermediality" are also used by Claus Clüver in his "On Intersemiotic Transposition," and Valerie Robillard in her "In Pursuit of Ekphrasis (an intertextual approach)," *Pictures into Words: Theoretical and Descriptive Approaches to Ekphrasis*, eds. Valerie Robillard and Els Jongeneel (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1998), 53-72.

between art history and film studies has largely been denied.[35] For example, Angela Dalle Vacche's anthology *The Visual Turn: Classical Film Theory and Art History* documents the "dialogue between the history of art history in the early twentieth century and the history of classical film theory"[36] and demonstrates that the boundaries between the two disciplines are beginning to disappear. However, in most of the scholarly practice today, this is not the case. Existing studies on film-art relationships generally center on documentaries about artists.[37] If feature films are considered, scholars generally either look at technical similarities between the visual arts and the movies,[38] or examine the use of paintings in one individual film,[39] or focus on the role of the artist as portrayed in bio-pictures about famous painters, rather than on the art works themselves.[40]

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[35] Johannes Zahlten, "Die Kunsthistoriker und der Film. Historische Aspekte und künftige Möglichkeiten," *Kunst und Künstler im Film*, ed. Helmut Korte, and Johannes Zahlten (Hameln: Verlag C.W. Niemeyer, 1990) 13.

[36] Angela Dalle Vacche, "Introduction: Unexplored Connections in a New Territory," *The Visual Turn: Classical Film Theory and Art History* (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Rutgers UP, 2003) 1.

[37] E.g. *Art History and Film: Starting from the Arts: A Symposium,* Boston, November 14-16, 1991 (New York: Program for Art on Film, 1992); Simon Howard Dizon, *The Image Incarnate: On the Documentary Representation of Painting in Film*, diss U of Iowa, 2000; Catherine Egan and John Egan, "Films About Artists and Their Audiences," *The Mediazation of the Arts,* ed. Catherine Egan, spec. issue of *Perspectives on Film* 4 (1982): 20-30; Günter Minas, *Bildende Kunst im Film der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Ergebnisse ener Bestandsaufnahme* (Berlin: G.Minas, 1986); Jens Thiele, *Das Kunstwerk im Film* (Bern: Herbert Lang; Frankfurt a.M. and München: Peter Lang, 1976).

[38] E.g. Angela Dalle Vacche, *Cinema and Painting: How Art Is Used in Film* (Austin: U of Texas P, 1996); Anne Hollander, *Moving Pictures* (New York: Knopf, 1989).

[39] E.g. Jürgen Paech. "La belle captive (1983). Malerei, Roman, Film (Rene Magritte / Alain Robbe-Grillet)," *Literaturverfilmungen*, ed. Franz-Josef Albersmeier and Volker Roloff (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp 1989) 409-436; and Gerd Bauer, "Jean-Luc Godard: Ausser Atem/A Bout de Souffle (Frankreich 1959)," *Kunst und Künstler im Film*, eds. Helmut Korte, and Johannes Zahlten (Hameln: Verlag C.W. Niemeyer, 1990) 111-121.

[40] E.g. Ellen Fischer, "Das Künstlerbild im amerikanischen Spielfilm der 50er und 60er Jahre," *Film, Fernsehen, Video und die Künste: Strategien der Intermedialität*, ed. Joachim Paech (Stuttgart and Weimar: Verlag J.B. Metzler, 1994) 103-113; and John A. Walker, *Arts & Artists on Screen* (Manchester and New York: Manchester UP, 1993). Helmut Korte's

## FILM AND PAINTING

Relatively few scholars have attempted to outline the various ways in which paintings can be used in film. Susan Felleman's *Art in the Cinematic Imagination* examines a range of ways in which films have incorporated works of art, using "psychoanalytical and feminist theory to uncover the meanings that the incorporation of art has for and in movies."[41] However, her study does not account for different ways in which art may be integrated and used in film, and her examples range from films in which art plays a minor role as background picture to films about artists without differentiating degrees and kinds of filmic appropriation of art.

Donna L. Poulton in her 1999 dissertation, *Moving Images in Art and Film*, has outlined sixteen categories for the intertextual integration of paintings into feature films.[42] With her focus on the quotes referring to art works in films, several of the categories she outlines could in fact represent instances of filmic ekphrasis and will be further discussed in Chapter 2. However, of the three categories she analyzes in detail, only one ("Films that directly quote paintings," i.e. in which paintings are directly shown to the viewer) could classify as ekphrastic, while the other two neither require a (real, fictional, or tableau vivant) image to be used, nor do these films provide any verbal discourse about art.

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"Kunstwissenschaft – Medienwissenschaft: Methodologische Anmerkungen zur Filmanalyse," *Kunst und Künstler im Film*, eds. Helmut Korte, and Johannes Zahlten (Hameln: Verlag C.W. Niemeyer, 1990) 21-42 is somewhat of an exception, since it is concerned with methodological problems in the analysis of films about artists, in the course of which he briefly discusses several such films. However, his analysis does not pertain specifically to the transmedialization of the art work in the film, but has as its goal an overall interpretation of the film.

[41] Susan Felleman, *Art in the Cinematic Imagination* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006) 2.

[42] Donna Lauren Poulton, *Moving Images in Art and Film: The Intertextual and Fluid Use of Painting in Cinema*, diss Brigham Young University, 1999.

In contrast to the films Poulton discusses, fiction features about artists, usually do include some verbal as well as visual representation of artworks.[43] Yet, John A. Walker, the only scholar so far to have undertaken an extensive analysis of such bio-pictures, claims that in focusing on the biography of an individual artist, these films generally neglect the artwork or interpret it as merely an aspect of the artist's personality and biography (19). Although this may be true for some biographical features, I contend that this negative assessment can be challenged and qualified by comparing the ekphrastic use of painting in feature films about art and artists with its function in literary texts.

Furthermore, I maintain that it is essential for a full understanding of ekphrasis in films to distinguish it from the genre of biographical feature films. Cinematic ekphrasis is neither synonymous with nor a subgroup of bio-features, but can occur in other feature films as well. Moreover, my use of the term filmic ekphrasis refers only to particular scenes or sequences, rather than signifying a filmic genre. In contrast to ekphrastic poems, which more easily classify as a genre due to the compact nature of poetry, in most novels, dramas and films, ekphrasis will take up only a quantitatively small aspect of the whole work, insufficient to classify as genre.[44] So unlike Bruhn's claim with regard to

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[43] Of course there are some exceptions, such as James Ivory's *Surviving Picasso* (1996) or Robert Altman's *Vincent and Theo* (1990) both of which feature very few representations of paintings and very little of the discussions revolve about art.

[44] Again, there are some exceptions, in which a whole novel or drama could be considered ekphrastic, for example Antonio Buero Vallejo's drama *El sueño de la razón* (of which I will discuss only one scene in chapter three), E.T.A. Hoffmann's novella *Prinzessin Brambilla*, which is inspired by a series of etchings by Jacques Callot, Gert Hofmann's *Der Blindensturz* (1985), a book-length narrative that verbalizes Brueghel's *The Parable of the Blind*, and Pierre Ajame's *La laitière de Bordeaux d'après le tableau de Fransisco Goya* (1985), a novella inventing the story behind Goya's *Milkmaid of Bordeaux*.

ekphrastic music (*Musical* xvii-xix), I do not allege that filmic ekphrasis represents a separate genre of films.

In his essay "Film and Painting" André Bazin also takes up the criticism against films about art works. Bazin argues that these films are both didactically useful (by bringing the masses to appreciate art and by bringing together high and popular culture) and, by uniting high and popular culture within themselves, a work of art in their own right. As Bazin emphasizes, "[t]he film of a painting is an aesthetic symbiosis of screen and painting" (168). Moreover, he concludes by comparing films about art, such as Resnais' *Guernica* and *Van Gogh*, or Pierre Kast's *Goya*, to "a certain type of literary criticism which is likewise a re-creation – Baudelaire on Delacroix, Valery [sic.] on Baudelaire, Malraux on Greco" (169). What Bazin is here referring to is various cases of ekphrasis that fall between literature and art history. By indicating that films about art are comparable to that type of ekphrasis, Bazin emphasizes that these films are, like their literary counterparts, aesthetically valuable as well as valuable pieces of art criticism, that is, criticism that is itself a work of art.

Just like literary ekphrasis, its filmic counterpart also relates to the formal, stylistic aspects of the re-presentation of the art work through cinematographic devices. Unlike the purely verbal nature of most literary ekphrases, however, film has at its disposal verbal, visual and auditory (e.g. background noises, music) means with which to transmedialize a painting. Thus, the discourse of filmic ekphrasis can be constituted by both of the sign systems (the verbal and the visual) that are separate and often in competition in a literary ekphrasis. In other

words, filmic ekphrasis reenacts in the cinematographic medium itself the antagonism between word and image that is central to the tradition of ekphrasis. In literary ekphrasis, as in films, it is often the visual elements that revalue or subvert the written/spoken word. Likewise, just as literary ekphrasis often uses the discourse about the image as a self-reflective statement on its own status in comparison to the visual image, so can the insertion of works of art into a film function as a self-referential comment on the film as a "moving image" and its relationship to the silent, static image. This is particularly the case with films that embody pictures in *tableaux vivants*,[45] with which film often "seeks to outdo" the static visual representations, and "in the process, it defines its own modalities."[46]

However, as my analyses in the chapters that follow will show, filmic ekphrasis is not only verbal and visual. My analysis will demonstrate that it can also be auditory, thus adding another sign system to the filmic re-presentation of a work of art, and potentially further heightening the tension and interconnections between sign systems. Moreover, filmic ekphrasis can forgo all verbal discourse in favor of a purely visual and auditory one, examples of which will be discussed in the following chapters. Thus, an analysis of ekphrastic scenes or sequences in film is linked to questions such as how the various sign systems are interrelated

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[45] The *tableau vivant*, the "static embodiment of well-known paintings by human actors" has a twofold origin, one of which are Diderot's bourgeois tragedies, "a paradigmatic moment of dramatic intensification during which the actors hold their poses and all motion on the stage ceases." The other origin is pornographic, derived from an eighteenth-century sex therapist. Cf. Brigitte Peucker, "Filmic Tableau Vivant: Vermeer, Intermediality, and the Real," *Rites of Realism: Essays on Corporeal Cinema*, ed. Ivone Margulies (Durham, NC and London: Duke UP, 2003) 294.

[46] Brigitte Peucker, *Incorporating Images: Film and the Rival Arts* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1995) 6.

within one medium, if and why film privileges one over the other, and how the various sign systems can interact to interpret another artistic medium.

Placing selected feature films about art and artists in the tradition of ekphrasis, I explore what the use of paintings in films implies about the social roles of art. Who speaks about art and in what contexts? How does art function in films to convey social or economic positions? Does the relationship between ekphrasis and social power change from text to film? Comparing filmic treatments of paintings by Vermeer, Rembrandt, and Goya with ekphrases in literary texts, I will examine if and how the medium of ekphrasis (i.e. literary or filmic) alters the representation of the visual arts, in order to show what the similarities or differences imply about issues such as the function of art for the construction of a personal and/or social identity and gender roles. Do writers and filmmakers ascribe the same or different roles to the function of words and images, of speaking and looking? Does the concept of the *paragone*, the rivalry between words and images, intensify or lose relevance in filmic ekphrasis due to film's status as a hybrid medium?

In order to delineate how depictions of a particular painter's works differ in literary and cinematic discourse, that is, how the medium shapes the interpretation of a particular work of art, I propose to discuss ekphrases of artworks by well-known painters who are widely represented in literature and film. I believe that the creative process by which a painting is transformed into a poem or a narrative text can usefully be compared to the transformation of a painting to its cinematic rendering. Just as Siglind Bruhn has shown with regard

to musical ekphrasis, I allege that the literary and filmic rendering of a painting "correspond to a degree that justifies adapting the terminology of ekphrasis developed in the literary field" ("Concert" 559). In Chapter Two I will therefore develop and discuss a system of ekphrastic categories and discuss how they apply to literary texts as well as to films. With the help of these categories, I describe varying forms and degrees of ekphrasis in order to provide and illustrate a vocabulary for analyzing the similarities and differences of ekphrasis in literature and film. This vocabulary refers to ways in which authors and filmmakers can use the visual arts as well as to degrees of involvement with them. In comparing the use of ekphrasis in three literary genres and film, I will show what different types of ekphrasis predominate in each genre and why, and what the predominance of certain categories implies with regard to the relationship between words and images in film and literary texts. As these comparisons will demonstrate, filmic ekphrases often reveal similar power structures as those of literary texts, despite the fact that cinema is a hybrid genre itself. Analyzing the similarities and differences between literary and filmic ekphrasis, then, will provide insight into the various dynamics of words and images in different genres. Furthermore, in discussing ekphrasis as a form of reception, this comparison will also highlight the ways in which popular, well-known works of high art are received in other high art media (poetry, novels, and drama) as well as popular culture (here represented by film).

As a segue into the discussion of these categories and their application to film, I discuss the German photographer Thomas Struth's series of *Museum*

*Photographs* as examples of ekphrasis represented visually. The following four chapters deal with the representation of selected works of art, and focus on social vs. aesthetic concerns, and issues of gender. In order to minimize the scope and range of my study, and thus the danger of generalizations, I have limited myself not only to a controlled sample of three artists, Goya, Rembrandt, and Vermeer, but even further, to only one work of art or a clearly identifiable group by each: Goya's *Capricho 43: El sueño de la razón produce monstrous*, Rembrandt's self-portraits, and Vermeer's paintings of single women, particularly *Girl with a Pearl Earring* and *Woman with a Pearl Necklace*.

The first three analyses largely focus on aesthetic and socio-political concerns, looking at ekphrases on works by Goya and Rembrandt. In chapter three, I discuss how Goya's *Capricho 43*, *El sueño de la razón produce monstrous*, is used in a poem, a drama, and a film. Chapter four continues this analysis of Goya's etching in a novel and its film version. In all of them, ekphrasis functions as a dramatization of the parallel between private-aesthetic and socio-political conflicts and the artist's ability to control them with his art. In chapter five, on Rembrandt's self-portraits, I analyze the role of ekphrasis as dramatization of the painter's self-clarification in a screenplay and a film. Here, I show how the film tends to intensify the screenplay's interpretation of the artist's public role play through his self portraits, and uses cinematic re-constructions of those self portraits to create its own version of "Rembrandt." In the last chapter I turn to gender issues. Chapter six examines two novels and films about Vermeer, analyzing how the novels use ekphrasis for female empowerment, whereas the

films revert to the traditional male gaze and voice and a more socio-political role of art. In comparing the changes of the film adaptations of Tracy Chevalier's *Girl with a Pearl Earring* and Susan Vreeland's *Girl in Hyacinth Blue* with regard to degree and kind as well as point of view of the ekphrastic scenes, I show how the films underscore the socio-political implications of art and use ekphrasis to demonstrate male power, while the novels use it as space of female self-realization.

In the concluding chapter seven I attempt to draw some inferences from the preceding chapters and discuss whether film does in fact appropriate the image by giving it a voice as well as a living body in representing it as a tableau, for example, or whether it allows the image to signify on its own by representing it visually. What are the different implications of purely verbal as opposed to mostly visual ekphrasis? And how do the four different ekphrastic categories (attributive, depictive, interpretive, and dramatic) affect the interpretation of the work of art? In so far as ekphrasis can be said to be a self-reflective genre, to what degree are the four categories self-referential, and what role does the paragone play in visual, filmic ekphrasis?

# Chapter 2: Methodology

## THOMAS STRUTH'S *MUSEUM PHOTOGRAPHS* AND VISUAL EKPHRASIS

From 1989 to 2001, the German photographer Thomas Struth traveled to museums in six different countries to take photographs of people looking at pictures within the context of a museum. His series, entitled *Museum Photographs*, now comprises seventeen images[47] which represent the public or private reception of art works in the public setting of the museum. Focusing on the interaction between paintings and viewers, these photographs record different attitudes to viewing art. For example, in *Kunsthistorisches Museum III, Vienna 1989* an elderly man is shown as if privately conversing with Rembrandt's *Seated man with a loose ruff collar* (ca. 1633).[48] By contrast, *Uffizi I, Florence 1989* shows two women with a guide book in front of Giotto's *Ognissanti Madonna* (ca. 1310) who, in contrast to the gentleman in Vienna, do not attempt to see for themselves, but probably see only what they read. Similarly, *Musée du Louvre I,*

[47] Of the circa 800 pictures he took, he chose 15 for an exhibition in 1992 in Washington (cf. Phyllis Rosenzweig, *Thomas Struth – Museum Photographs, Exhibition Brochure* [Washington DC: Hirschborn Museum and Sculpture Garden, 1992]). In an exhibition in 1993-1994 in the Kunsthalle Hamburg, which has an excellent exhibition catalog with an extensive study by Hans Belting, Struth extended the series to include seventeen photographs. However, a recent catalog of Struth's work (*Thomas Struth 1977-2002* [New Haven and London: Dallas Mueum of Art, Yale Universtiy Press, 2002-2003]) includes several new museum photographs not present in the *Museum Photographs* catalog. These were taken between 1999 and 2001, and feature museums of two more countries, Japan and Germany. The photos taken at the Pergamonmuseum in Berlin, moreover, extend the subject of his museum photographs to architectural spaces. Moreover, another new photo, *National Gallery II, London 2001*, is the first to feature only a single lonely painting, without any visitors. Finally, *Alte Pinacothek, Self-Portrait, Munich 2000* is the only photograph with an oblique self-portrait of Struth's left back and arm (cf. Maria Morris Hambourg and Douglas Eklund, "The Space of History," *Thomas Struth 1977-2002* (New Haven and London: Dallas Museum of Art, Yale Universtiy Press, 2002-2003) 163.

[48] For copyright reasons, all illustrations of this dissertation had to be removed.

*Paris 1989* and *Musée du Louvre IV, Paris 1989* show "radically different relationships between painting and viewer, and our eyes also respond in quite different ways."[49] In the first case, we look *at* the people as if on a stage, with the paintings in the backdrop, while in the second, we look *with* the viewers, "who thus drag us into the picture with them, at a painting" (ibid).

Whereas the photographs mentioned so far portray individually distinguishable viewers, *Stanze di Raffaello II, Rome 1990* represents a mass of tourists in the Vatican, many of whom do not even look at the frescoes on the walls. Others, by contrast, directly point to them and seem to be talking to each other about something they have noticed in the images. In contrast to the silent, quiet contemplation of pictures, as in *Kunsthistorisches Museum III, Vienna 1989* and others, this photograph not only represents visual perception, but also auditory and kinetic elements: it seems to capture the noise and movement of the tourists in that Vatican room.

Auditory and kinetic and thus temporal elements are in fact present in most of Struth's *Museum Photographs*. Many of them depict gestures, either toward the paintings or of people in a conversation, possibly about the paintings. Furthermore, recorded in an "extended snap-shot" (Belting 8), the museum visitors occasionally slip out of focus. The camera thus uses a method, frequently found in painting, of blurring the contours of figures to give the impression of movement. This is the case, for example, in *Musée du Louvre I, Paris 1989*,

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[49] Hans Belting, "Photography and Paining: Thomas Struth's Museum Photographs," *Museum Photographs*, by Thomas Struth, ed. Hans Belting, trans. Michael Robertson (München: Schirmer/Mosel, 1998) 19.

*Kunsthistorisches Museum I, Vienna 1989, Stanze di Raffaello II, Rome 1990* and *Galleria dell'Accademia, Venice 1992*.

But even photos that do not use this method achieve an impression of temporality through the body positions and the gaze of the viewers. For example, *National Gallery I, London 1989* shows five people around Giovanni Battista Cima's *The Incredulity of St. Thomas* (ca.1502-4) of which all but one have moved their head in a direction different from their body position. The camera thus traces the movement of their gaze as it is directed from one painting to the next. Yet, though recording both the "ephemeral glance of the passer-by" (here the two men on the left) "as well as prolonged gaze of viewer" (here the girl with the blue coat and the woman with the green coat), Struth's museum photographs "attribute to this prolonged gaze, within the suspended time of the photograph, a length it perhaps never attained itself" (Belting 17). That is, while emphasizing the temporal element of movement, the photos also underscore their ability to arrest time. "Frozen in a pose of movement" (Belting 7), the museum visitors in fact seem to represent tableaux vivants.

This notion of the tableau is further highlighted by the correspondence of composition in many of the photographs and the pictures they show. Several critics have noted how in Struth's photographs the paintings' spaces and figures often seem to extend to the spaces and people of the photograph.[50] For example, in *National Gallery I, London 1989*, the people form a circle around the central image mirroring the circle the apostles form around Jesus in Cima's painting.

[50] Cf. Belting 10-13, 21; Hambourger and Eklund 157, 163; Rosenzweig 2; and Charles Wylie, "A History of Now: The Art of Thomas Struth," *Thomas Struth 1977-2002* (New Haven and London: Dallas Museum of Art, Yale Universtiy Press, 2002-2003) 152.

Moreover, the woman in the green coat on the right and the man with the red jacket on the left almost seem to belong into the painting in terms of the color schemes of their clothes and their hair. Reddish and greenish colors are the predominant ones of the figures' garments. Likewise, the woman's red-blond hair matches that of many figures in the painting, while the man's brown hair corresponds to the reddish-brown looking garment of the apostle on the far left (which is actually more purple than brown, a lighter color than it appears in the photograph).

Similarly, the woman's clothes and hair in *Rijksmuseum I, Amsterdam 1990* perfectly match the black and brown palette in Rembrandt's *Steelmasters* (*The Sampling Officials*, 1662) But this photograph goes even further in extending the space of the painting to that of the photograph. The woman's position in front of but turned away from the painting, looking in the same direction as the gentlemen, gives the impression that she is being stared at by those six men. As Belting put it, "[t]hose doing the viewing are in the painting this time, and the young woman seems to be fleeing from their eyes" (20).

In fact, many of Struth's photographs blur the boundaries between photograph and painting by "put[ting] the people in the paintings and in front of them on the same level" (10) and by stressing the symmetry and correspondences between the paintings and the museum visitors.[51] In many cases, "the painted tableau, with its composition, corresponds to the tableau vivant of the observers, even when the permanence of a living picture is only being stimulated by the

[51] Other examples are *Musee du Louvre IV, Paris 1989; Art Institute of Chicago II, Chicago 1990;* and *Galleria dell'Accademia I, Venice 1992.*

photograph" (9). Just as many of the traditional realist pictures Struth has photographed attempt to blur the border between art and reality, so do these photographs self-reflexively question the difference between painting and photography. Transposing the paintings from their original medium and museum context to a new context and medium, Struth's *Museum Photographs* underscore the similarities between the two media. In demonstrating the ability of photography to adopt the signifying power of paintings and to adapt it to its own medium, these photographs enter into a rivalry with painting, especially with regard to color and composition, two "ancient privileges of painting" (Belting 8). In short, by inviting the viewer to compare painting and photograph, Struth places his work in the tradition of the *paragone*, the rivalry between the arts.

But his photographs not only provoke comparison with painting, but also with one of the younger media: film. Belting has noted how Struth's photos "are reminiscent of film takes in which the camera position is fixed, and only the people move as they enter or leave the field of vision" (8). Moreover, as a series they represent a montage of different takes of similar motifs seen at different distances and angles. Each photograph by itself can be seen as a film still or a mise-en-scène of a moment in a narrative sequence. The combination of visual, auditory and kinetic elements that I have discussed above further contributes to the impression of a film image.

Seeing these photographs as mise-en-scène or film stills makes it possible to interpret them as examples of visual ekphrasis in two ways. First, most of them imply or even directly show instances of verbal ekphrasis, where museum visitors

hear, read or talk about the art works shown, often with accompanying gestures or bodily movements. With their implication of speech and movement, these photos are a dramatization of different forms of interaction between paintings and people. In so far as ekphrasis is a kind of reception, the subject of these photographs, then, is ekphrasis in various forms and varying degrees of intensity. Second, in representing the museum visitors in a tableau or an extension of the paintings in the museums, Struth provides a type of visual ekphrasis of the art works. By photographing the people in poses and colors resembling those of the paintings and from a camera position that fuses the two levels, Struth updates the paintings, and indicates the bond between art and life as well as the relevancy of and need for art in contemporary society.

The last photo in the series in the exhibition catalog, made two to three years after the others and entitled *Galleria dell'Accademia, Venice 1992* is a particularly striking example of these two types of ekphrasis represented visually. It shows a wide-screen, distance view of a room with Veronese's large-scale banquet scene *Feast in the House of Levi* (1573) covering the background wall in full. Veronese has achieved not only a perfect illusion of depth, but also of three-dimensionality, to which the pillars and the stairs on both sides contribute, and which Struth has exploited for his own illusionism. Because of the camera perspective, the people in Veronese's painting and the viewers immediately in front of it are about the same size, and in fact seem to belong to the banquet guests just as the figures in the picture seem to be stepping out of the frame and into the museum room. For example, the man with the red shirt in the far back

corner on the right seems to be about to walk up the stairs to participate in the banquet. Likewise, the man in Veronese's paining on the left, who is bending over the stairs, seems to be greeting or about to shake hands with one of the museum visitors below him. The museum visitors in the background, then, lose their status as viewers and become an extension of the painting, a tableau vivant that underscores the realism and illusionism of the painting as well as the ability of photography to fuse the present time and museum's space with the cinquecento palace of a Venetian aristocrat.

Paradoxically, then, while the people in the background of the photo do not seem to be viewers, but rather part of the painting, those whom we see as viewers, in the foreground of the photo, do not look at the painting the viewer of the photograph sees, but rather at Tintorettos' *Martyrdom of St. Mark* (ca. 1662-66) which, however, is not in the photo (cf. Belting 21). Thus, whereas the photo depicts the former group ekphrastically in form of a tableau vivant, the viewers in the foreground are examples of verbal ekphrasis represented visually. Their posture, movements and gestures display different attitudes to art and to seeing. The group of three on the left, for example, is shown here as more casual, perhaps even impatient viewers. Two of them are apparently moving, while the other is standing in a tired or bored pose. The man with the red shirt right behind them, on the other hand, stands still and looks contemplatively and steadily at the picture opposite him. The people on the right are engaged in a different kind of reception, one that is verbal by implication. Three of them do not look at the Tintoretto opposite them, but are apparently reading something on the sheet in front of the

man in the blue shirt. The man next to him seems to be about to say something to the woman on his right. The man in white leaning on the desk has a tour guide in his hand and might be verifying some information he just read.

This photo, with its implication of sound and movement, is reminiscent of a film still in which the work of art plays a role as background image, as tableau, and as object of contemplation and discussion. By contrast, a recent photograph not part of the series in the 2002 catalog does not itself resemble, but seems to depict a movie theater representation. *National Museum of Art, Tokyo 1999* shows a blurry mass of people in front of Delacroix's *Liberty Leading the People* (1830), which is shown in a glass case. The painting was part of a Japanese-French exchange of national treasures, and is used by Struth to connect "an encounter of separate historical moments with the more fraught and complicated clash of cultures" (Hambourg and Eklund 163). The dark room with the crowd seen from behind, and with the white glass case which resembles a movie screen onto which Delacroix's painting is projected, not only gives the impression of attending a film spectacle, but moreover, puts the photographer's camera in the position from where the screen image must be projected. In other words, the camera portraying the scene seems to be its origin and source. Thus, the photo not only gives the impression of recording a documentary projection on Delacroix's famous painting, but moreover, seems itself to create that projection. In short, the camera gives the illusion of both witnessing and producing an instance of filmic ekphrasis in the form of an art documentary.

## EKPHRASTIC CATEGORIES IN TEXTS AND FILMS

I have compared Struth's *Museum Photographs* to ekphrastic film stills, interpreting them as moments of ekphrasis in a mise-en-scène, in order to exemplify different ways in which ekphrasis can be visual. Just as literary ekphrasis verbalizes or dramatizes a work of art in its own medium, so do these photos visualize and dramatize the representation of art works in another medium. However, this analysis of the photographs has indicated that it is helpful to distinguish between different types of ekphrasis.

A definitive systematic model for distinguishing various kinds of ekphrasis is still lacking in the critical literature, although a few scholars have made some first steps in that direction. John Hollander has classified ekphrasis according to content and historical development, a system that is far too broad to be critically useful.[52] Gisbert Kranz has outlined a very complex system in which he classifies ekphrastic poems according to their achievement (*Leistung*), that is, transposition, supplementation (*Suppletion*), association, interpretation, provocation, playfulness, and concretization. He further distinguishes different types of ekphrasis: intention (*Absicht*), that is, descriptive, panegyric, pejorative, didactic-moralizing, political, socially critical, amusing, or amorous (173-234); structure, that is, elocutionary, monological, dialogical, epical, apostrophic, genetic, meditative, or cyclical (235-328); and referentiality (*Realitätsbezug*), that is, fictive or cumulative (329-344). This system is useful in that it allows for a very nuanced differentiation both in terms of form and content. It is most

[52] John Hollander, *The Gazer's Spirit: Poems Speaking to Silent Works of Art* (Chicago and London: U of Chicago P, 1995).

fruitfully applied to poetic ekphrasis, but in my opinion cannot easily be transferred to narrative or dramatic texts, let alone films.[53] Moreover, these categories are largely distinguished by content, whereas I am interested in a distinction that also caters to differences in form as well as quantitative and qualitative aspects.

A few other critics have proposed categories that are more widely applicable. I have already mentioned Tamar Yacobi's categories of the "ekphrastic model" and the "ekphrastic simile" in the previous chapter. Although Yacobi does not attempt to develop a system of classifications, these concepts fill a crucial gap by including heretofore neglected categories which are applicable to all literary genres as well as film. The ekphrastic simile, like a rhetorical simile, directly compares a tenor, or subject, to a vehicle. Thus, it is a very short, often "glancing allusion to a visual art object" that, however, "compensates for the minimum quantity by bringing the figure of speech into multiple cross-reference and interconnectivity" ("Verbal" 42). Similarly, the ekphrastic model is a mere brief allusion to a pictorial model or genre, by which the text can "abstract a bare theme from a multiplicity of particularized visual sources" ("Ekphrastic" 26) through mere hints or indirections. Yacobi's call for including these two neglected forms which previously may have been considered too brief and thus insignificant or superficial to be considered ekphrastic, has important consequences for filmic ekphrasis as well. The literary (and, as I would add, filmic) invocation of an ekphrastic model or simile "is an abbreviated reference to a whole pictorial set of

[53] Siglind Bruhn, however, does use the category of achievement and several of its subcategories in her analysis of musical ekphrasis.

works, which silently refers the reader [or viewer] to the original itself for details and extensions." (42).

Although not specifically designed for types of ekphrasis, but to distinguish degrees of "pictorialism" in novels, Marianne Torgovnick's continuum describes different ways and degrees in which authors can involve the visual arts in their work.[54] Her continuum starts with the "decorative use of visual arts" which applies to descriptive passages that are influenced by the visual arts, suggest an artistic movement, allude to an actual work or to novels in which one or more of the characters are painters (14-17). The continuum continues with the biographical use of the visual arts, which involves "showing how involvement with the visual arts shaped [the author's] psyche so as to influence aspects of the author's fiction" (18). In the ideological mode, authors represent major themes of their work in aspects related to the visual arts. Authors may also use the visual arts in this mode to derive a theory of fiction from art historical theories (19). Finally, the interpretive use of the visual arts is subdivided into perceptual and psychological uses, and "refers to ways in which characters experience art objects or pictorial objects and scenes in a way that provokes their conscious or unconscious minds" (22). This category emphasizes the perception and reception of a work of art. Torgovnick's continuum helps distinguish and compare uses of the visual arts that are "typical of certain novelists or certain periods in the history of the novel with those of other novelists or other periods" (14). My own system

[54] Marianne Torgovnick, *The Visual Arts, Pictorialism, and the Novel: James, Lawrence, Woolf* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1985).

has a similar goal and will adapt her categories to meet the more specific needs of distinguishing and comparing ekphrasis in literary texts and films.

Perhaps one of the most detailed and widely applicable models for distinguishing types of ekphrasis is Valerie Robillard's intertextual approach. Robillard proposes a "two-part system by which to categorize and articulate the wide varieties of ekphrases" which range from "texts which contain unequivocal re-presentations of specific artworks to those whose subtle references to the visual arts might be excluded from discourse on ekphrasis altogether" (53). The first part of this system is a "scalar model," based on Manfred Pfister's article "Konzepte der Intertextualität" (Concepts of Intertextuality) which contains the criteria communicativity ("the degree to which the artwork is marked in a text," Robillard 57), referentiality ("the extent to which a poet actually uses an artwork in the text," 58), structurality ("the poet's attempt to produce a structural analogue in a picture", 58) selectivity ("the density of pictorial elements which have been selected" or "the transposition of certain topics, myths, or norms and conventions of particular periods or styles of pictorial representation," 59), dialogicity ("the manner in which the poet creates a semantic tension between the poem and the artwork by casting the latter in a new, opposing framework," 59) and autoreflexivity (the extent to which the writer "specifically reflects on and problematizes the connection between […] his own medium and that of the plastic arts," 59).

In order to further distinguish degrees of ekphrasis, Robillard proposes a "differential model" with three categories (61-62). Its central "attributive"

category refers to the way in which the pictorial source is marked, that is, through direct naming, allusion, or indeterminate marking. While all ekphrastic texts must mark their sources in some way, an ekphrastic text will be generally either "depictive" or "associative." If a text falls under the depictive category, it explicitly portrays an art object, either through description or analogous structuring. Texts in the associative category, on the other hand, refer to conventions, styles, or ideas associated with the plastic arts.

Although designed for ekphrastic poetry, this bipartite model is applicable to all genres because of its basis in a theory of intertextuality. Such an intertextual framework is useful for a discussion of ekphrasis, since, as Robillard has noted, its subcategory of intermediality allows for direct reference as well as for indeterminate references and allusions in texts (or films) about paintings (such as Yacobi's ekphrastic simile or model), which are "frequently omitted from discussions on ekphrasis" (56). Intermediality, as Heinrich F. Plett has described it, is a sign transfer form one medium to another, a transfer which may involve single signifiers, or "themes, motifs, scenes or even moods."[55]

In her dissertation on *Moving Images in Art and Film,* Donna L. Poulton has used the theory of intertextuality and intermedial quotation to discuss the various ways in which films can quote paintings, artistic styles or movements. Not only are some of her categories of intersection between film and painting relevant for a discussion of filmic ekphrasis, but moreover, the intertextual methodology, specifically the theory of quotation she adapts from Plett, is pertinent as well.

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[55] Heinrich F. Plett, "Intertextualities," *Intertextuality*, ed. Heinrich F. Plett (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1991) 20.

Poulton describes sixteen categories for the intersection of painting and film, which, however, are rather broad and general so that their applicability to ekphrasis is limited. Her first category, "films that directly quote paintings" (10-17), that is, either the work itself or in form of a tableau, has the most ekphrastic potential of all her categories, yet this definition does not differentiate between different forms of quotation. Likewise, her categories three and five, "biographical films of real artists" (19) and "films about fictional artists" (21) do not take into account that films in these categories may take a vastly different approaches on how an artist's work, be it real or fictional, is represented. For example, James Ivory's *Surviving Picasso* (1996) though a biographical film of a real artist, is very poor in actual paintings by Picasso and has no ekphrastic scene, while Vincente Minelli's *Lust for Life* (1956) quotes many Van Gogh paintings in a variety of ways, several of which could be seen as ekphrastic.

Similarly, while some of the works to which Poulton's sixth category, "films that use paintings as prop or narrative device" (22), applies could represent instances of filmic ekphrasis, others might not. This category includes paintings that hang on a wall to denote a style or a personal trait, or paintings that may be part of the narrative. Examples are films such as Peter Greenaway's *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife and Her Lover*, in which a Franz Hals painting decorates the dining room, or the repeated motif of the portrait of Laura in Otto Preminger's film *Laura* (1944). As Poulton emphasizes, in films such as these, the pictures hanging on the wall are not just accidental, but support the narrative with their signification (25). Nevertheless, these scenes may not always be ekphrastic. This

would depend on how they are used in the film, and what role they play in the narrative.

That differentiation could be effected by a more systematic application of Heinrich Plett's categories for the analysis of quotation, which Poulton discusses, but has not applied to her category outline. Plett's theory is relevant for ekphrasis insofar as the visual image in ekphrasis is "quoted" in the text or film. However, verbal ekphrasis, unlike quotation, transforms, transmedializes and interprets the image as it quotes it. In so doing, it appropriates the image to a greater degree than quotation does and is thus a more violent and domineering device. By contrast, a mostly visual form of ekphrasis can resemble quotation to a greater extent, as a filmic quotation of an image on the film screen will appear more direct and unmediated than a verbal quote of an image (which can never be more than a paraphrase, a description, or an interpretation).

To be sure, a filmic quotation still transmedializes and appropriates the image even when it seems to leave it intact. In embedding the image in the filmic discourse, filming it in a determined position, from a particular angle and in relation to other objects in the same frame, a filmic quotation also assimilates the image it quotes. However, unlike verbal texts, film can quote images in two different ways. Whereas verbal quotations of visual images will always be purely verbal, for the viewer of a film there is a significant difference between an actual painting reproduced on the screen, and a tableau vivant of that painting by the film's actors. While the latter is clearly a transformation and transmedialization, and thus ekphrasis, of the painting, the former will need verbal and/or auditory

means and other filmic devices such as moving camera, zoom, etc. for the viewer to read it as an ekphrastic transmedialization. Plett's theory of quotation will thus be a useful tool for analyzing the spectrum from quotation to ekphrasis in film.

Plett's system looks at the "quantity, quality, distribution, frequency, interference, and markers of quotation" (Plett 8). With regard to quantity, how much from the quoted image is used, whether it is shown whole or in parts, and which parts of it, will provide insights into the function of the image in the text or film. For example, in Alain Resnais' short film *Guernica*, Picasso's famous image is never shown whole, but fragmented throughout, thus underscoring the film's atmosphere of violence and destruction. Plett's category of quality refers to the extent to and way in which a quotation is reshaped and recontextualized. The result of transposing one medium to another can either be "intertextual identity" or "intertextual deviation" (Plett 9). Plett distinguishes between the surface structure, the grammatical and structural transformations, and deep structure, the different layers of meaning generated by the intersection of and dialog between two or more texts (9-10). For example, as Claus Clüver has shown, Anne Sexton's "Starry Night" translates Van Gogh's painting into words, reproducing the details of it as well as its point of view ("Intersemiotic" 64-67). In Plett's terms, it would be an example of intertextual identity both in its surface and deep structure. By contrast, Alexander Fhares' "Ikarus" (1972) omits many items from Breughel's painting and replaces them with (often anachronistic) elements not found in the work. The surface structure of the quotation thus deviates from the original. However, in its deep structure, the poet is as consciously anachronistic as

Breughel: in the poem, Ikarus falls into our contemporary world, in the painting into Breughel's (ibid. 73).

With regard to distribution, Plett notes that the positioning of quotes at the beginning or end is structurally important. For example, Carlos Saura's *Goya in Bordeaux* (1999) begins the film, during the initial credits, with a quote of Rembrandt's painting of a bull carcass, thus paying tribute to one of Goya's confessed masters, even though the Dutch painter is not present in the rest of the film. The frequency of quotations is another important category. As Plett notes, to the degree to which the frequency of quotations increases, their meaning and significance of their own is also heightened while that of the quotation context diminishes. The fewer quotations, the greater the importance of the quotation context as opposed to the quotes themselves (11). An extreme example is Alain Resnais' *Guernica*, a film made entirely of quotes from Picasso's work. These quotes thus almost cease to be quotes and begin to acquire new meanings from the context of the film.

Plett's category of interference refers to the conflict between the quotation-context and the new context in which the quotation appears. This conflict, or interference, occurs "when quotation and context differ with regard to language, dialect, sociolect, register, spelling, prosody" (Plett 11). Transferred to ekphrasis, interference marks the conflict between pictorial and verbal or pictorial and filmic signs, or one between the socio-historical or cultural contexts, or when films quote paintings that are intentionally out of character with a home, setting, or character (Poulton 63). For example, Godard's *Pierrot le fou* quotes several

paintings by Renoir with which the female protagonist Marianne is identified (to the extent that she is called Marianne Renoir[56]), yet, her unscrupulousness and violence also jar with Renoir's soft and tender female images.

Finally, markers indicate the occurrence of quotations within the text, either overtly or covertly, making the quote explicit or implicit (Plett 11-12). According to Poulton, an explicit quote occurs in Clint Eastwood's *Absolute power*, in which the camera pans across several paintings before stopping on a painting by El Greco. This painting "receives a secondary quote as we see that it is Eastwood's character sitting in the National Museum sketching the El Greco. […] The positioning of Eastwood's character in front of the El Greco informs the viewer that this character is perhaps talented, discerning, absorbed and that he may identify with the torment of the El Greco painting" (Poulton 64).

## FOUR CATEGORIES OF EKPHRASIS IN LITERATURE AND FILM

In developing my own system of categories for comparing and distinguishing types of ekphrasis, I have adapted the ideas and concepts of these different approaches outlined above. My system comprises four categories that are ample enough to be applicable to poetry, novel, drama, and film, yet different enough to minimize overlaps, although I am aware that overlaps cannot always be avoided. While these four categories are not on a scale or continuum, like Torgovnick's, they do imply increasing degrees of complexity. Thus, on the whole, the categories are qualitative more than quantitative, that is, they account

[56] Cf. Jean-Luc Godard, *Pierrot le fou*, trans. Peter Whitehead (London: Lorrimer Publishing Inc, 1985) 37.

more for degrees and kinds of involvement with or of the visual arts in the text or film, rather than for the amount of time a picture is shown or discussed. It should also be noted that they apply to scenes or parts of the works only, not to a whole text or film. Each text or film (even poem) can fit into more than one of the categories if different scenes/episodes are taken into account.

My goal is to articulate with the help of these categories which aspects of a work are used in what way, which are left out, what is added, and why. This system will not only help me differentiate degrees and kinds of ekphrasis in texts and films, but moreover, will provide ways of articulating the different uses of art across the genres. Thus, it will be a crucial tool for determining if and why certain categories predominate in a particular genre. Moreover, through this system, my study can assess the range of expressions available for filmic transmedializations of art works and compare them to those existing in literary ekphrasis. The application of these categories to the texts and films in question will also help me focus on specific images and their use in these texts and films rather than analyzing the works in all aspects, thus preventing generalizations. Finally, this system of classification allows me to account for different types of ekphrasis, or different uses of visual images, all of which are equally valid ekphrases but can be rather different in their form, function and effect on the viewer. I thus hope to provide a first step toward a methodology and vocabulary applicable to filmic ekphrasis.

**Attributive Ekphrasis**

The first category I propose to call "attributive ekphrasis," a name which I have borrowed from Robillard's system (61-62). However, my use of this category goes beyond hers, which describes the way in which a text marks its source. As she explains, the marking of a picture in this category can range from a mere allusion without explicitly specifying the source, to explicit and direct naming but without descriptive elaboration. Similar to Torgovnick's "decorative" category, this category refers to the smallest degree of involvement with the visual arts, yet, as Yacobi has shown in her discussion of the ekphrastic simile and the ekphrastic model, even a brief allusion to an art work, style or genre can be sufficiently complex to be an instance of ekphrasis.

My category of attributive ekphrasis includes the verbal allusion to pictures in a description or dialog of a text or film, that is, scenes in which artworks are shown (as actual pictures or tableaux) or mentioned, but not extensively discussed or described. In Plett's terms, they can be only slightly marked, and with little frequency and distribution. Yet they are generally quantitatively fairly high, that is, in a film, the images are shown either whole or in significant portions, generally in wide angle so as to situate them within the scene and in relation to other objects and/or characters. Moreover, they are also qualitatively important since they contribute to the signification of the text or film, or to the characterization of the protagonists. The visual arts may also be used visually as background images or narrative device, as in Poulton's sixth category (22-25).

An example of attributive ekphrasis may be found in Alfonso Plou's drama *Goya* (1996), which represents several Goya pictures in brief tableaux vivants that function as background to the main action and illustrate an episode of Goya's life.[57] The play takes place after Goya's death, when he is visited by several of his friends, with whose help he recreates and recounts his life. Often, he or one of his friends reads from Goya's letters, while other actors represent a painting related to the scene described in the letter, in the form of a tableau vivant. This is the case, for example, with the painting *La familia del Infante Luis,* which is mentioned in the excerpt from Goya's letter without details about its composition, but its simultaneous representation in the background helps the spectator visualize the image and imagine its characters (97-98).

Similarly, in Jean-Luc Godard's *A bout de soufflé* (1959), several images are integrated into the narrative or even into the dialog between the two protagonists, Patricia and Michel.[58] When Patricia says dreamingly, "I wish we were Romeo and Juliet," Picasso's *Les Amoureux* (1923), which hangs over her bed as a postcard, fills the screen momentarily. The use of this image as commentary not only adds tension to their dialog by underscoring the protagonists' different sensibilities, but it also adds a conflict or contradiction between three different images, Picasso's painting, a (mental) image of Romeo and Juliet, and the film image of Patricia and Michel. These images provide three different concepts of relationships, one loving and harmonious, one loving yet

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[57] Alfonso Plou, "Goya," *A la Mesa de los tres reyes: Buñuel, Lorca y Dalí. Goya. Rey Sancho* (Zaragoza: Diputación Provincial de Zaragoza, 2000) 87-146.

[58] *A bout de soufflé*, dir. Jean-Luc Godard, perf. Georges de Beauregard, François Truffaut, Jean-Paul Belmondo, Liliane David, and Jean Seberg, 1960, DVD, WinStar TV & Video, 2001.

conflictive, and one conflictive and deceptive. Patricia projects herself onto the female images of her reproductions (another example is Renoir's portrait of *Mlle. Irene Cahen d'Anvers*, 1880), using the images to cover up her true, deceitful self.

The attributive category also includes texts or films that refer to ideas or conventions associated with the plastic arts (thus merging with Robillard's associative category [62]), or to what Yacobi has called "ekphrastic model," that is, a type or genre of paintings. For example, Gottfried Benn's poem on Rembrandt, "Gewisse Lebensabende" (1946), generically alludes to the late self-portraits of the Dutch artist without specifically discussing one in detail.[59] Rembrandt's late self-portraits function here as index of his self-searching attitude, his almost painful inquiry into the deepest recesses of the ageing self. A filmic example of this type occurs in Jean-Luc Godard's *Pierrot le fou* (1965), which uses Picasso posters on the wall in the house of the female protagonist Marianne and the gangsters later on in the film to denote the young woman's unconventionality as well as the violence of and around her.[60] Yet the Picasso series contrasts with a series of images by Renoir, which underscore Marianne's romantic spirit and emotion (at one point, Marianne says to Ferdinand: "you speak to me with words and I look at you with emotions"). Moreover, most of the paintings cited in *Pierrot le fou* are (female) portraits by Renoir, Picasso,

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[59] Benn, Gottfried, "Gewisse Lebensabende," *Sämtliche Gedichte*. (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta Verlag, 1998) 229-231.

[60] *Pierrot le fou*, dir. Jean-Luc Godard, perf. Georges de Beauregard, Anna Karina, Jean-Paul Belmondo, 1965, DVD, Winstar TV & Video, 1998.

Modigliani, Rouault, and Matisse. The predominance of the portrait genre in this film "provides a counterpoint to the portrayal of subjectivity in crisis."[61]

**Depictive Ekphrasis**

In the second category I propose, the *depictive ekphrasis*, images are discussed, described, or reflected on more extensively in the text or scene, and several details or aspects of images are named and in the film shown in close-ups, zooms, and with slow camera movement. Again I have borrowed the name from Robillard's system, but use it in a slightly modified way. Robillard includes in this category both "description" of large or small sections of an artwork as well as "analogous structuring" of the text (61). My depictive category does include the texts that fall under Robillard's subcategory "description," but I keep the "analogous structuring" for my next category, since in my view structural similarity implies a more complex degree of ekphrasis.

This type of ekphrasis comes closest to the widespread definition of ekphrasis as "verbal representation of visual representation" (Heffernan 3) because even in film it is largely verbal, although of course aided by camera movement and position, as well as by other auditory elements such as music. In Plett's terms, the quotations in this category are recognizably marked through many details from the image. While they may or may not be frequent or occur at prominent places in the text or film, they are qualitatively significant since these

[61] Angela Dalle Vacche, "Jean Luc Godart's *Pierre le Fou*: Cinema as Collage against Painting," *Literature/Film Quarterly* 23.1 (1995): 48.

instances of ekphrasis will play a central role for the plot or a characterization in a narrative text or film, or constitute the main subject of a poem.

There are few examples of this type of ekphrasis in poetry, since most poetic ekphrases go beyond description. If it occurs in poetry, it is likely to represent only part of the poem, which then moves into the third or fourth category of ekphrasis. This is the case for example, in Günter Kunert's "Wenn die Vernunft schläft, kommen die Ungeheuer hervor," a poem on Goya's *Capricho* plate 43, *The Sleep of Reason brings forth monsters*.[62] It starts out as a depictive ekphrasis in its first eight lines, describing the position in which the man sits at the table, and how he is surrounded and attacked by "hawks" "bats" and "owls" who intrude from the background of the etching. However, in the next stanza, the poem moves into a dramatic ekphrasis, which continues throughout the rest of the poem.

Examples of depictive ekphrasis abound in prose works. Mario Vargas Llosa's Gauguin novel *El Paraíso en la otra esquina* (*The Way to Paradise*, 2003) contains several instances of it.[63] At the end of the novel and shortly before his death on a remote Tahitian island, Gauguin reflects on the paintings he has done in the past couple of years, describing his personal favorite, *La hermana de caridad*:

> Una monjita de la misión católica contrastaba su figura arrebujada en tocas, hábitos y velos, símbolo del terror al cuerpo, a la libertad, a la desnudez, al estado de Naturaleza, con ese *mahu* semidesnudo que exhibía

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[62] Günter Kunert, "Zu Radierungen von Goya," *Tagwerke, Gedichte, Lieder, Balladen* (Halle: Mitteldeutscher Verlag, 1961) 85-88.

[63] Mario Vargas Llosa, *El Paraiso en la otra esquina* (Bogota, Colombia: Alfaguara, 2003). *The Way to Paradise,* trans. Natasha Wimmer (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003).

> ante el mundo, con perfecta soltura su convicción, su condición de ser libre y artificial de hombre-mujer, su sexo inventado, su imaginación sin orejeras. (*El Paraíso* 472)[64]

In this depictive ekphrasis, central elements of the painting are mentioned and described in terms of how they stand in relation to each other, as well as what they look like or what impression they give the viewer. This depiction is qualitatively important since it takes up one of the central themes of the novel, different attitudes to sex and gender, thus contributing to the novel's interpretation of Gauguin and his oeuvre. The description highlights the contrast between what Vargas Llosa's Gauguin sees as the Western, Catholic, civilized inhibition represented by the nun, and the Tahitian, uncivilized "man-woman" who is free even to chose his own sex. Not only has Gauguin in this novel been persistently fascinated by these men-women, but also with how to represent the Tahitian sexual and personal freedom to show their superiority to Western civilization.

Many instances of depictive ekphrasis occur in Lion Feuchtwanger's novel *Goya oder Der arge Weg der Erkenntnis* (1951), most of them from the narrator's perspective (the characters' ekphrases are mostly of the next category, interpretive). A painting that functions in this novel as beginning of Goya's new style and political attitude, the *Portrait of Doña Lucía*, is described by the narrator in its process of creation:

> Von der Leinwand schaute eine Dame, sehr hübsch, das längliche Gesicht leicht maskenhaft und spöttisch, die Augen weit auseinanderstehend unter

[64] "Swathed in wimple, habit, and veil, and symbolizing terror of the body, freedom, nudity, and nature, a nun from the Catholic mission stood in contrast to a half-naked *mahu*, who, with perfect ease and assurance, faced the world as a free, artificial man-woman, his sex invented, his imagination unfettered" (*The Way* 363).

> hohen Brauen, den breiten Mund mit schmaler Ober- und starker Unterlippe geschlossen (*Goya* 21).[65]

Although there are at least eight more ekphrases of this painting throughout the novel, this is the only time details of it are mentioned, and thus, the only time the reader is allowed to visualize it. Since this work in the novel plays such an important role in Goya's subsequent aesthetic and political change, and is discussed in terms of its style on various occasions, this first descriptive ekphrasis is crucial for the reader, for whom the later ekphrases would otherwise remain meaningless.

There are countless further examples in this novel in which the narrator reconstructs images verbally through extended description with many details, a depictive ekphrasis often followed by the novel's characters' interpretive reflections on the paintings. This same procedure is applied in Vargas Llosa's Gauguin novel, such as the passage quoted above, which is also followed by Gauguin's reflections. Because film can directly show the paintings, it largely foregoes or abbreviates depictive ekphrases.

A filmic example of his category is the *Nightwatch* scene in Alexander Korda's *Rembrandt* (1936).[66] When this famous commissioned painting is revealed to the public, people point to several details of the image, which they condemn, while the camera shows these details in close-ups, moving back and

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[65] Lion Feuchtwanger, *Goya oder Der arge Weg der Erkenntnis* (1951; Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 1961) "From the canvas a lady looked down: very pretty, the rather long face like a mocking mask, the eyes far apart under arched eyebrows, the mouth wide, the thin upper lip and heavy lower one meeting firmly" (*This Is The Hour*, trans. H.T. Lowe-Porter and Frances Fawcett [New York: The Viking Press, 1951] 16).

[66] *Rembrandt*, dir. Alexander Korda, perf. Charles Laughton, Gertrude Lawrence, Elsa Lanchester, and Edward Chapman, 1936, DVD, MGM Home Entertainment, 2001.

forth between the image and the indignant viewers. But rather than confirming the public's dislike of the canvas, for the film viewer, the camera points almost fetishistically to the now famous painting, debunking the public's judgment of it. This is an instance of a high degree of "interference" in Plett's terms, as there is an intentional conflict between the reception of the original painting as quoted in the film, and the quotation of the painting and its reception as perceived by the viewer of the film.

**Interpretive Ekphrasis**

As noted above, depictive ekphrases are often followed by interpretive reflections on the painting. Such reflections are examples of my third category, which I propose to call *interpretive ekphrasis*. This type can take two different forms, either as a verbal reflection on the image, or a visual-verbal dramatization of it in a mise-en-scène tableau vivant. As in the previous category, several details of the picture can be mentioned, but here, the degree of transformation and additional meaning is higher; thus, the two categories are qualitatively different. Moreover, in addition to the commenting and interpreting voice, the verbalization of the image may add further nuances to it. Often, then, the image may function as springboard for reflections that go beyond its depicted theme. In the case of poetry, a genre in which this category abounds, the poet may additionally emulate the picture's formal construction or aspects of the painter's visual style in the structure of the poem.

Blas de Otero's poem "Guernica" (1959/60) mentions only a few, if central, details from Picasso's famous painting: "toro" ("bull," l.19) "cuello" ("neck," l.23) "el dedo / de este niño," ("the finger / of this child," ll.24-25) "luz" ("light," l.27) "grito " ("scream," l.16).[67] However, these remain unconnected details that do not come together to form a description. Moreover, as the first part of the poem indicates, the poet does not contemplate the painting directly, but from a spatial and temporal distance. Thus, these isolated elements of the painting reflect its indirect, immaterial presence in the mind of the poet, where they function to spark reflections on Spanish history and the relationship between seeing, memory and writing. The second part, in which all the elements from the painting are cited, is framed by two imperatives, "ved" ("see," l.14 [2nd person plural]) and "nunca ved" ("never see," l. 26). The call to memorize and visualize history ("ved…"), then, ends with the negative command ("oh nunca ved aqui/la luz equilibrando/el arbol de la vida," 26-28) that emphasizes the impossibility of visualizing a reconciliation, of overcoming the memory of war and violence. However, in spite of the painting's physical absence, its temporal and spatial distance, it is interpreted as a direct, sensual experience, rather than intellectual-analytical reflection. The imperatives "ved" (see) "esparcid" (divulge, distribute) "oid" (hear) refer to visual, tactile and auditory experiences that emphasize the strength of the painting's visual memory and the real and actual presence of suffering made concrete through its visualization in Picasso's work as well as through the poet's verbalization ("hablando viendo…"/"[In] speaking, I see…").

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[67] Blas de Otero, "Guernica," *Antología Poética: Expresión y Reunión* (Madrid: Alianza, 1981) 130.

In Vargas Llosa's Gauguin novel and Feuchtwanger's Goya novel, the same pictures I have discussed above under the depictive category are also used in the novels in interpretive ekphrases. For example, the above-cited description of *La hermana de caridad* in Vargas Llosa's *El Paraíso en la otra esquina* is followed by an abstract interpretive commentary by the narrator and by a personalized reflection from the perspective of Gauguin:

> Un cuadro que mostraba la total incompatibilidad de dos culturas, de sus costumbres y religiones, la superioridad estética y moral del pueblo débil y avasallado y la inferioridad decadente y represora del pueblo fuerte y avasallador. Si en vez de Vaeoho [his last Tahitian wife] te hubieras amancebado con un *mahu* lo mas probable era que lo tuvieras todavía aquí contigo, cuidándote […]. No fuiste un salvaje cabal, Koke [Gauguin's nickname]. (*El Paraíso* 472)[68]

Here, the narrator abstracts from the previous description and proceeds to an interpretation of the painting and its significance for Gauguin. Not only does the painting demonstrate the painter's general belief in the superiority of the uncivilized people, but it also leads him to a reflection about his own life and sexuality, to the realization that in spite of his emulation of the Tahitian life style he has remained conventional in his sexuality. The reflection on the painting thus leads to reflections sparked by, but going beyond its subject.

In Lion Feuchtwagner's Goya novel, as in Vargas Llosa's Gauguin novel, interpretive ekphrases often follow depictive ones. After detailed descriptions by the narrator of the five works Goya composed in response to witnessing an

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[68] "It was a painting that showed the total incompatibility of two cultures, their customs and religions; the aesthetic and moral superiority of the weaker, subjugated people and the decadent, repressive inferiority of the stronger, dominant people. If instead of Vaeoho [his last Tahitian wife] you had set up house with a *mahu*, he would probably still be here caring for you, […]. You weren't a full-fledged savage, Koké [Gauguin's nickname]." (*The Way* 363)

Inquisition trial, the works are discussed and commented on various times by Goya's friends.[69] Goya's aide Agustin Esteve's particularly detailed reflection follows the descriptions immediately. His interpretive ekphrasis of the works focus both on their formal composition and on larger implications of the works' significance, as well as their implicit political statements:

> Was auf diesen Bildern zu sehen war, das waren umständliche Begebenheiten mit vielen Menschen, aber da war nichts Überflüssiges mehr. Es war eine sparsame Fülle. [...] [A]lle fünf Bilder, so mannigfach ihr Inhalt schien, gehörten zusammen. [...] [D]as war *eines*, das war Spanien. Die ganze Wildheit war darin, das Grausen, das Dumpfe, Dunkle, das sogar in der spanischen Freude ist. Trotzdem [...] lag darüber ein Leichtes, Beschwingtes: der Schrecken der Vorgänge war aufgehoben durch die zarte Helligkeit des Himmels, das schwebende, abgestufte Licht. [...].
>
> Lehnte diese Malerei sich
> Gegen die Regierung auf? Empörte
> Sie sich gegen Thron und Altar?
> Nichts dergleichen war mit Augen
> Sichtbar, noch mit Worten sagbar.
> Trotzdem störten diese kleinen
> Bildern einen auf, viel mehr als
> Worte, die empörerischsten.
> [...] (*Goya* 190-91).[70]

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[69] In the novel, these works predate the *Caprichos*, while actually they were made several years later. They are: *Bullfight Scene* (c. 1812-19), *The Madhouse* (c. 1812-19), *Procession of Flagellants* (c. 1812-19), *Burial of the Sardine* (1808-19), and *Inquisition Scene* (c.1812-19).

[70] "The subjects of these pictures were complex events involving many people, yet nothing was superfluous. It was a carefully measured abundance. […] [A]ll five pictures, diverse though their contents were, […] were a unity, were Spain. The whole ferocity was there, the horror; and the dullness and darkness that are present even in Spanish happiness. And yet […] a lightness lay over it all, something rhythmic; the frightening impact of the action was mitigated by the tender clarity of the sky, the floating, delicately shaded light. […] Were these pictures, then, seditions? / Were they hostile to the ruling / Powers? Did they rise against the / Throne and Altar? Not so far as / Eye could see or lips express in / Words. And yet these little pictures / Were disturbing. They disturbed one / More than words howe'er disloyal. […]" (*This Is* 171)

Agustin realizes here that Goya has further advanced in his stylistic composition. Moreover, again the formal achievement corresponds to a further step in the direction of a more committed art. Especially in the final trochees, Agustin expresses his awareness that these pictures are Goya's first pictorial expression of his discontent with the political reality, a discontent, that is, however, impossible to pin down. The paintings provoke feelings and emotions, but cannot be nailed down in a definitive interpretation. Subsequently, many of Goya's friends view and comment on the newness and expressiveness of these pictures, but Don Miguel also warns Goya of their possible danger for him, when the Inquisition becomes aware of the "disguised indignation in these pictures" (*This Is* 172). Goya, however, is sure of his safety, pointing out that he has done nothing offensive: "Ich habe nichts Nacktes gemalt. Ich habe niemals die Füße Unserer Lieben Frau gemalt. In meiner ganzen Malerei ist nichts, was gegen die Inquisition verstößt" (ibid.).[71] And indeed, the Archbishop, when he does command Goya before the Holy Office, interprets them as "gute, fromme Werke. […] Es geht von dieser 'Inquisition' jener wohltätige Schrecken aus, den das Heilige Offizium anstrebt" (*Goya* 196).[72]

Interestingly, Konrad Wolf's 1971 film based on this novel changes the frequency, distribution as well as the point of view of these interpretive ekphrases. Agustin Esteve's lengthy interpretive ekphrasis which in the novel occurs in an inner monologue, expressing his unuttered thoughts and feelings about the works,

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[71] "I've never painted the nude. I've never painted the feet of Our Lady. There's nothing in any of my paintings that goes against the interdicts of the Inquisition" (*This Is* 173).
[72] "These are good, pious works […] From the 'Inquisition' there emanates that salutary shock which the Holy Office strives to administer" (*This Is* 176-77).

is in the film reduced to an expression of speechlessness ("Ich sage gar nichts. Da kann man gar nichts sagen" ["I am not saying anything. It's simply impossible to say anything at all about them"]), which in the novel are the only phrases he utters about these paintings in direct speech. Goya's wife Josefa simply finds them "Ketzerei" ("heresy") as does a woman in front of the shop window where Goya displays his works. However, the film greatly expands the Inquisitor's interpretive ekphrasis of these paintings. In addition to the evaluative comments he utters in the novel, the Inquisitor in fact defends the painting with the same phrases Goya used in the book: that there are no naked women, that the legs of the Virgin are covered, and that nothing represented is against the laws of the Church. The film thus heightens the role of the Inquisition and the artist's dependence of its approbation, thus further underscoring the dramatic change of Goya's fate when he later has to flee from the wrath of the Inquisitor, who curses and condemns him and his art.

While this verbal kind of interpretive ekphrasis is less frequent in films, this category can also take the form of a tableau vivant of an image, a device more frequently employed in film, but also in drama or narrative texts. In a tableau vivant, paintings are quoted through a verbal-visual recreation in a mise-en-scène that can slightly depart from or add nuances to the original image. This type thus corresponds in part to Poulton's first category of intersections between art and film ("films that directly quote paintings"), but is at once wider and narrower. It is narrower in that it only applies to paintings that are actually acted out and performed, not merely quoted. It is wider in that it also applies to the verbal

dramatization of an image in a literary text, for example, when a real-life scene is described that corresponds to an actual picture.

For example, Antonio Buero Vallejo's drama *Las meninas* (1960) begins with a tableau vivant of Velázquez' paintings *Menipo* and *Esopo*, in which we see

> …los dos mendigos que, unos dieciséis años antes, sirvieron de modelos a Velázquez para sus irónicas versiones de Menipo y Esopo. La semejanza es completa […]. [Martin] mantiene a la izquierda la postura en que un día fuera pintado. Lo mismo hace a la derecha Pedro, que fue pintado como Esopo, y el sayo que le malcubre […] recuerda inconfundiblemente al que vistió cuando lo retrataron. (106)[73]

Moreover, Martin, directly addresses the spectators, informing the viewers that he and Pedro are not paintings, but real people ("No, no somos pinturas," 108; "No, we're not paintings"). The tableau's illusion of reality is thus deliberately thwarted by the characters themselves, a device by which the drama emphasizes the double status of its characters. This recurs throughout the rest of the drama, in which all characters are introduced in the same attire as in Velazquez' *Las meninas* (1656) and at the very end compose that painting in a tableau vivant. By presenting the characters simultaneously as paintings and as human figures, the drama produces a sort of alienation effect that makes the viewer aware that the characters are neither paintings nor the characters they represent in the drama. Thus, it also points to a parallel between the past and the

[73] Antonio Buero Vallejo, *Las Meninas*, 1960 (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1999). "…the two beggars who, some sixteen years before, served as models for Velazquez's ironic versions of Menippus and Aesop. The resemblance is complete […]. [Martin] maintains at stage right the pose in which he was painted. Stage left, Pedro – who was painted as Aesop – does the same. Although his loose tunic is not the same one in the painting […] it recalls unmistakably the one he wore when his likeness was captured" (*Las Meninas: A Fantasia in Two Parts*, trans. Marion Peter Holt [Trinity: Trinity UP, 1987] 5).

present, and constitutes a device central to the *teatro histórico* as Buero Vallejo conceives it.[74]

In film, the tableau will generally be shown with slow camera movement and a wide angle view, so that the camera can briefly linger over the tableau to invite a comparison with the actual picture. This is thus a mostly visual form of ekphrasis, though verbal discourse and auditory elements such as music may be present and add further nuances to the interpretation of the image. For example, Alexander Korda's *Rembrandt* (1936) represents *David Playing the Harp Before Saul* (ca. 1656) in a tableau vivant. While Rembrandt is painting his models, a beggar as King Saul and his son Titus as David, he narrates the biblical story of King Saul to the beggar-model, who is moved to tears by it and at one point wipes his tears on the curtains just as he does in Rembrandt's canvas. Curiously, this visual ekphrasis is produced by the artist's storytelling power, by his narrative. In other words, the verbal narrative produces the visual ekphrasis, yet at the same time, the narrative becomes the verbal ekphrasis of this visual ekphrasis, since it narrates and verbalizes what is visually represented in the scene. The film thus invites comparison both between the film image and Rembrandt's painting, and between the two visual versions and the verbal story.

Another filmic example occurs in Peter Greenaway's *A Zed & Two Noughts* (1985) with Vermeer's *The Art of Painting* (ca. 1666-67).[75] The

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[74] See, for example Antonio Buero Vallejo, "Acerca del drama histórico," *Obras Competas* II, ed. Luis Feijoo and Mariano de Paco (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1994) 827-8. See also Virtudes Serrano, introducción, *Las meninas*, by Antonio Buero Vallejo (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1999) 10-25.

[75] *A Zed and Two Noughts,* dir. Peter Greenaway, perf. Andréa Ferréol, Eric Deacon, Brian Deacon, and Gerard Thoolen, 1985, Fox Lorber Home Video, New York: Distributed by WinStar TV and Video, 1999. Screenplay by Peter Greenaway, *A Zed and Two Noughts* (London and Boston: faber and faber, 1986)

sequence begins as the camera pulls back from an extreme close-up of the black and white stripes of the painter's back, slowly revealing the entire scene. The mise-en-scene mirrors Vermeer's painting almost exactly, except that the model is a woman from another Vermeer painting, *The Girl with a Red Hat* (ca. 1666-67) who is here naked but still wearing her red hat. Throughout the zoom, several snaps are heard and flashes seen as if the scene was being photographed, thus further emphasizing the staging of the scene. Moreover, at the end of the zoom out, the woman gets angry and moves out of her pose, throwing down the book she held in front of her naked body, and thereby ending the tableau. The slow camera zoom, the flashes, and the model's movement that ends the scene "clearly mark […] this tableau vivant sequence as cinematic" (Peucker, "Filmic Tableau" 300).

**Dramatic ekphrasis**

As can be seen from the above examples, interpretive ekphrasis is not only more complex, but also often involves a higher degree of textual or filmic self-reflexivity. Such examples of self-reflexivity are even more likely to occur in the fourth category I propose, the *dramatic ekphrasis*. In this type of ekphrasis the images are dramatized and theatricalized to the extent that they take on a life of their own. Thus, this category is the most visual of all four, and has a high degree of *enargeia*. In other words, texts and films have the ability to evoke or produce the actual visual images alluded to in the minds of the readers or viewers while at the same time animating and changing them, thereby producing further, perhaps

contrasting images. In Plett's terms, with regard to quantity, the images can be represented in full or significant details, but the dramatization can also take the images apart, take its characters out of the original context of the picture, and allow them to move beyond the picture's frame. In terms of frequency and distribution, this type of ekphrasis will occur at a central moment in the work and for an extended period of time. Qualitatively, texts and films thus display a high degree of transformation and additional meaning. Likewise, the degree of interference will be fairly high, since the dramatization of images, which takes them out of their immediate context and picture frame, implies a conflict between the original context of the quotation and the new context in which the quotation is inserted.

This ekphrasis can take different shapes in texts and films. Literary texts can bring characters from one or more images to life and make them characters in the story or drama that speak and act for themselves, thus reflecting on and interpreting the image they come from in the light of their new quotation context. For instance, in Rafael Alberti's drama *Noche de guerra en el museo del Prado* (1955/56), the protagonists are all characters from history paintings in the Prado museum that have come alive, especially those by Goya and Velázquez.[76] The action takes place in November 1936, when the Prado was evacuated. The characters from the paintings come together in the now empty museum, defending it against the attacks and reflecting on their own experiences of earlier wars. Alberti thus uses the animation of paintings not only to present a different

[76] Rafael Alberti, *Noche de guerra en el Museo del Prado. El hombre deshabitado*, ed. and intro. Gregorio Torres Negrera (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2003).

perspective on the absurdity of war, especially modern warfare, but also to underscore the continuity of past and present, and the lack of progress or improvement in humanity, thus highlighting the relevance and ability of the old masters to teach the viewer about his or her own times.

In the case of poetry, Rafael Alberti's "Sucedido" ("Happened") from his collection *Los ocho nombres de Picasso* brings to life a painting by Picasso identified in the poem as "Mujer sentada con sombrero lila" (l. 6; "Seated woman with purple hat").[77] The dramatization occurs as a deliberate staging: the poet gives the reader a situation, "Un café de la calle" (l.1; "A Café on the street"), where the speaker himself is sitting and looking at a book of Picasso reproductions. This leads him to imagine the ensuing situation, placing the woman from Picasso's aforementioned painting on an empty seat in the café (ll.4-6). While the poem does mention a few details of the portrait (l.9, l.12), it does not describe it, but rather takes the picture out of its frame and "subverts the act of framing by allowing framed figure to speak for herself" (Persin 81). Not only does the lady order ice-cream for herself, but moreover, she is invited to dinner and to dance by a gentleman whose question ends the poem, thereby keeping the frame open to a variety of further dramatizations of this portrait. Alberti thus interprets Picasso's image as incentive for liberating the imagination, as encouragement for the imagination to debunk conventions of what is normal and what is not, and as opening up endless possibilities of surreal situations.

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[77] Rafael Alberti, "Sucedido," *Los ocho nombres de Picasso y no digo mas que lo que digo (1966-1970)* ( Barcelona: Kairos, 1978) 79.

Similarly, Camilo José Cela's *Los Caprichos de Francisco Goya* (1989) invents short stories or commentaries inspired by and involving characters from Goya's *Caprichos* (1799).[78] Most of the story-commentaries explicitly situate the characters within the action represented in Goya's aquatints while adding details in the form of explanations or motivations. For example, in number 32, *Por que fue sensible* (*Because she was sensitive*) the narrator tells the story of a very sensitive girl that nevertheless ends up in prison for having hurt the lover she refused. Others of these story-commentaries are exclusively inspired by one of the represented characters with only brief reference to the represented actions. This is the case of number five, *Tal para cual* (*Two of a kind*) which narrates the story of the womanizer, Jeronimo Heredia, focusing on his risky life, while only one line alludes to the depicted situation and could be understood to be spoken by the two *viejas* in the background of the aquatint. Yet other stories do not refer to any concrete visual aspect of the aquatint, but generally narrativize its theme, moral or the folk wisdom its title refers to. For instance, number four, *El de la rollona* (*Nurse's child*) narrates the story of the boy Gustadito Mantecón who remains a child all his life because his family does not let him grow up. The title of this image refers to a Spanish saying, "The nurse's child who is seven years old and still is being breast-fed," a situation which Cela's story dramatizes without explicitly verbalizing Goya's etching.

Unlike Goya's *Caprichos*, which depict proverbs, commonplaces, and general types, all the characters in Cela's *Caprichos* have individual names, and

[78] Camilo José Cela, *Los Caprichos de Francisco de Goya y Lucientes* (S.L.: Silex 1989).

are talked about in a familiar tone. However, these two different procedures achieve the same goal: both emphasize the universal and familiar of the depicted situations. Moreover, Goya's etchings invite such a narrative treatment since most of his titles already imply a narrative situation. Exploiting this underlying narrativity, Cela invents his own "caprichos" parting from the characters or the general moral of Goya's, but concretizing and individualizing them.

While the above-cited examples of dramatic ekphrasis apply to literary texts only, both texts and films can represent images in the form of an extended montage of a tableau vivant. Dramatizing an image throughout a longer episode or several shots, the text or film uses the image as a comment on the episode or sequence while simultaneously reflecting on the pictorial image. In film, this is can be done in a slow or rapid montage, moving camera, and shifts between wide angle and close-ups or detail shots.

For example, Peter Greenaway's film *A Zed and Two Noughts* (1985) animates and dramatizes Vermeer's *The Music Lesson* (*A Lady at the Virginals with a Gentleman*; c. 1662-65) by introducing movement and sound. The surgeon and artist van Meegeren (incidentally also the name of a famous Vermeer forger in the early to mid 20$^{th}$ century) forces his patient Alba to play the piano (virginal), thereby bringing the painting to life. The scene begins with a montage of close-ups of Vermeer women that serves to "underscore van Meegeren's obsession with a characteristic yellow bodice worn by women in four of Vermeer's paintings" (Peucker, "Filmic" 299). The following recreation of Vermeer's painting differs in several important respects from the original. First,

the addition of Dirck van Baburen's *The Procuress* (1622) absent in this Vermeer but present in others of his works, underscores the erotic tension that the Dutch painter has played down in his painting. Second, the recreation is "undermined by the fact that the only tune Alba can play is infantile" (ibid), which highlights the ridiculous nature of the whole enterprise. Finally, the mise-en-scène also includes another Vermeer woman, the *Woman in the Red Hat*, who in the film is instigated by van Meegeren to impede a relationship between Alba and the widower twins, Oliver and Oswald. These three major changes not only intensify and multiply the erotic tensions of Vermeer's painting, but also highlight the gender roles by emphasizing how the woman, who in the film is an invalid with an amputated leg, is at the mercy of the man's desire which she fulfills against her will.

It should be noted, however, that not all animations of images are examples of dramatic ekphrasis. For example, Julie Taymor's *Frida* (2002) also animates many of Frida Kahlo's paintings by having the protagonist(s), mostly Frida herself, literally step out of the frame after a static representation of the framed picture. However, here the animation of the picture does not contribute to a filmic interpretation of the picture or scene but merely serves to anchor Frida's works within her biographical experiences.

A literary reinterpretation of the original image through an extended montage of a tableau vivant occurs in Lion Feuchtwanger's novel *Goya oder Der arge Weg der Erkenntnis*. The novel has several different types of ekphrases of Goya's *El sueño de la razón produce monstruos (The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters*; *Capricho 43*). The second one, which occurs in part three of the novel,

is an extended tableau vivant that represents Goya's *Capricho 43* by dramatizing the situation depicted in that aquatint. Goya repeatedly feels besieged by strange creatures: "Um ihn hockte es, flog es, spukhaft, katzenköpfig, eulenäugig, fledermauslfügelig" (*Goya* 402).[79] But as is implied in the aquatint, in which an owl tenders a pen to the man at the table, with the help of painting, he manages to dominate those creatures:

> Mit furchtbarer Anstrengung riß er sich zusammen, griff zum Stift. Warf sie aufs Papier, die bösen Geister. Da waren sie. Und da er sie auf dem Papier sah, wurde er ruhiger. An diesem Tag, am nächsten und am übernächsten, ein zweites, ein drittes Mal und immer öfter, ließ er sie aus sich heraus, die Gespenster, aufs Papier. So hielt er sie fest, so wurde er sie los. Wenn sie übers Papier krochen und flogen, waren sie nicht mehr gefährlich. (*Goya* 402).[80]

Feuchtwanger interprets Goya's *Sleep of Reason* here as image to be overcome by an image of awakened reason. This tableau vivant thus implies a visual sequence that extends Goya's original aquatint to an image in which the man has taken the pen from the owl and used it to dominate the nightmarish creatures around him. Goya's *Capricho 43* is thus represented as implying the possibility of banning the demons by putting them on paper. Moreover, the quote above also emphasizes the repeated or continuing preoccupation with this transition from the threat as depicted in Goya's image to banishing the menacing creatures.

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[79] "It [the nightmare of despair] squatted by him, flew about, spectral, cat-headed, owl-eyed, bat-winged" (*This Is* 364).

[80] "With a fearful effort he pulled himself together, seized a pencil Dashed them down on paper, the evil sprits. There they were. He spent almost a whole week alone in his bare rooms with his ghosts. He did not shut his eyes against the demons, did not through himself across the table to hide his head from them. He looked them in the face, held onto them till they had revealed themselves to him fully, then forced them and his fear and madness onto paper. " (*This Is* 364)

I have discussed examples of dramatic ekphrasis that apply to literary texts only, and others that apply to texts as well as films. A third example refers to a predominantly visual kind of dramatic ekphrasis in films and drama, which can use a montage of actual images to reflect on the text, scene or dialog, so that the images take the place of verbal commentary. In film, the montage can be both fast and slow, and use the images in their entirety or in close-ups.

For example, Jean-Luc Godard's *Pierrot le fou* uses a rapid montage of Picasso paintings to stand in for a torture scene of which the viewer only hears Ferdinand's screams and the gangster's questions. The sequence begins as Ferdinand enters the gangster's apartment. On the wall on his left, one of the two Picasso posters that hang there is visible, *Jacqueline aux fleurs* (1958) A little later, as the torture starts, Pierrot is shown between the two Picasso portraits, *Jacqueline aux fleurs* on the right and *Portrait de Sylvette* (1954) on the left. In the same position, the female protagonist Marianne had stood previously with a pair of scissors, enlarged with the help of an extreme close-up, which she moved across the screen as if slicing the two images in half, thus foreshadowing the violence and agony these images will come to signify.

During the torture, we see *Jacqueline* first in a close up, then upside-down in a close-up, followed by a close-up of the *Portrait de Sylvette*. This montage uses the images as pictorial signs for agony,[81] yet, there is a curious discrepancy between the images' subjects (portraits of young women) and the agony of torture they are used to signify. As Leutrat has stressed, the close-ups focus on only the

[81] Joachim Paech, "Ein-BILD-ungen von Kunst im Spielfilm," *Kunst und Künstler im Film*, eds. Helmut Korte, and Johannes Zahlten (Hameln: Verlag C.W. Niemeyer, 1990) 48.

blue sections of *Jacqueline aux fleurs*, a color emphasized in all three shots.[82] Interestingly, blue is also the color in which Ferdinand paints his face before he blows himself up at the end of the film, thus turning himself into a painted image (cf. Dalle Vacche, "Jean-Luc" 52). Moreover, the use of two female portraits to denote the torture (rather than a more violent image such as Picasso's *Guernica*) links the violence to the female protagonist Marianne who is in fact responsible for Ferdinand's appearance in the gangster's apartment. Indeed, Marianne is connected to female portraits at other times in the movie: As Dalle Vacche has shown, "the second time we hear Marianne's full name, the flash shot of Renoir's *La Petite fille à la gerbe* (1888) intervenes" and "as soon as Marianne becomes a painting by Renoir, or an image with an erotic appeal, she leads Ferdinand to death" (51). Picasso's portraits are thus reinterpreted in the context of the film, and used as visual commentary on and substitute of another visual-verbal scene.

An example of a drama which uses paintings as commentary on the scene is Antonio Buero Vallejo's *El sueño de la razón* (1960).[83] Throughout this play, changing paintings from Goya's *Pinturas negras* (*Black paintings*; 1820-23) in the backdrop serve as commentary on the scene. As John Dowling has shown, Buero connects the showing of the *Pinturas negras* in the backdrop with scenes and dialogs in the drama, thereby producing an interchange between painting and dialog or scene, which mutually illuminate and interpret each other.[84] Dowling

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[82] Jean-Louis Leutrat, "Godard's Tricolor," *Jean-Luc Godard's Pierrot le fou*, ed. David Wills (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000) 68.
[83] Antonio Buero Vallejo, *El tragaluz, El sueño de la razón* (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1970).
[84] John Dowling, "Buero Vallejo's interpretation of Goya's 'Black Paintings,'" *Hispania* 56.2 (1973): 450.

has identified three groups of pictorial commentaries: five paintings comment on Goya's personality and his relationship with his mistress Leocadia; seven express the artist's vision of Spain of his day; two affirm Goya's own destiny and integrate the meaning of the collection as a whole (ibid). Buero often projects two or three paintings at a time in order to relate the personal subjects to those that comment on the political situation in Spain, thus connecting Spain's superstition and ignorance and Goya's entrapment.

For example, by showing *Leocadia* and the *Aquelarre* together, Buero connects Goya's personal feeling of entrapment and betrayal by his housekeeper and mistress Leocadia with a comment on contemporary Spain as world of horror. King Fernando VII is here both associated with the black he-goat of the *Aquelarre* (*The Witches' Sabbath*) and with *Saturn*, who devours his own children. This painting is projected when Leocadia tells doctor Arrieta about her fears that Goya is mad; it reappears when Goya looks through his telescope to Fernando VII's palace, and again when the Royal Volunteers, sent by the king, come to torture him. Buero's repeated use of the *Saturn* thus portrays the king as source of fear and violence and underscores his threat to those he should protect. Similar to Godard's use of the Picasso portraits, then, Buero uses Goya's *Pinturas negras* as visual commentaries on a visual-verbal scene. In this dramatic ekphrasis, the paintings comment on the scene and dialogs just as the dramatic action reflects back on the interpretation of the images.

In the various forms of dramatic ekphrasis, then, the competition between the ekphrastic medium (literary text or film) and the visual source is the strongest,

since the dramatization, animation, or visual montage of images, underscore the ability of literary texts and films to transmedialize the image by making it come alive or by re-inventing and re-creating it. With regard to reception, this is the most independent and imaginative type of ekphrasis, but also the most appropriating. Recognizable as ekphrasis only by those readers or viewers who are familiar with the artist's oeuvre, dramatic ekphrasis tends to hide its ekphrastic discourse, all but amalgamating the art work into the own medium.

In the following chapters, I will discuss selected literary and filmic ekphrases of four artists' works, focusing on how the four different ekphrastic categories affect the interpretation and function of the paintings in the texts and films about works by Goya, Rembrandt, and Vermeer.

# Chapter 3:
# Goya's *The Sleep of Reason* in Poetry, Drama and Film: Dramatizing the Artist's Battle with his Creatures

## INTRODUCTION

Francisco Goya's *Caprichos* are inherently marked by conflict and competition between words and images, reading and viewing. A series of eighty etchings[85] published in 1799 accompanied by an announcement in the *Diario de Madrid* as well as by written commentaries of disputed authorship, these works are dialogical, polyphone, and profoundly ambiguous. As Juan Carrete Larrondo and Ricardo Centellas Salamero have emphasized, "[l]os *Caprichos* de Goya deben ser mirados y deben ser leídos" ("Goya's *Caprichos* have to be looked at and have to be read").[86] Moreover, many of the *Caprichos* explicitly thematize the activities of reading, writing, seeing and observing. Andrew Schulz has shown how the "central perceptual tension" present in the works themselves as well as in the *Diario de Madrid* advertisement, is the "dialectic between two types of vision – observation and fantasy."[87]

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[85] The medium of the *Caprichos* is a combination of regular etching and aquatint. As Robert Hughes explains in *Goya* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), aquatint unlike etching allows an effect of watercolor wash and gives a gamut of tones from delicate grey to a rich, velvety back of a density that could not be rivaled by linear etching (178). Hughes goes on to emphasizes the dramatic effect of aquatint in the Caprichos: "Those deep, thick, mysterious blacks against which figures appear with such solidity and certainty and yet with such apparitional strangeness, that darkness in which most detail is lost, so that one's eye moves into a record of states of mind rather than a description of a 'real' world – such effects owe their intensity to the aquatint medium" (179).

86 "Mirar y leer los *Caprichos* de Goya. Palabras Preliminares," *Mirar y Leer: Los Caprichos de Goya* (Zaragoza: Diputación Provincial de Zaragoza; Madrid: Calcografía Nacional; Pontevedra: Museo de Pontevedra, 1999), 13. All English translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

[87] *Goya's Caprichos: Aesthetics, Perception, and the Body* [New York: Cambridge UP, 2005), 11.

This dialectic is also mirrored in the two self-portraits within this series. The opening plate shows the stern-looking artist in profile, dressed as a bourgeois gentleman, and identified in the caption as "Fran.co Goya y Lucientes / Pintor" ("Francisco Goya y Lucientes / Painter"). His piercing look sideways at the viewer underscores his status as keen, unrelenting observer and satirist.[88] By contrast, the second self-portrait, *Capricho* 43, *El sueño de la razón produce monstruos* (*The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters*), portrays the sleeping artist at his desk, conjuring up all sorts of nightmare creatures in his dream, which surround him. Here, "artistic creativity is linked with the fantastic and visionary" (Schulz 11).[89]

*Capricho* 43 is often seen as key to the whole series, and its interpretation frequently stands in for the meaning of the rest of the etchings.[90] For example, López-Rey claims that the caption within plate 43, *El sueño de la razon produce monstruos*, "is just as much an opening for the second part as it is a commentary on the first" (136). However, the etching has been used for two opposing interpretations, and the *Caprichos* have consequently been claimed as representing either a Romanticist position that criticizes the doctrine of reason, or

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[88] The commentary on this etching from the manuscript which is now in the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid in fact reads: "Verdadero retrato suyo, de mal humor y gesto satírico" (qtd. in Edith Helman, *El trasmundo de Goya* [Madrid: Alianza, 1983], 213.) ("True portrait of himself, in bad humor and with satirical expression.").

[89] Susanne Schlünder has also pointed out the bipolar role of the author as manifested in those two self-portraits, which she sees as complimenting each other, offering a view, respectively, of the internal and external nature of artistic creation, the artist as public figure and private person. See. *Karnevaleske Körperwelten Francisco Goyas. Zur Intermedialität der Caprichos* (Tübingen: Stauffenburg Verlag, 2002), 125.

[90] See, for example, Edith Helman, *Los Caprichos de Goya* (Estella, Navarra: Salvat Editores/Alianza Editorial, 1971), 113 and José López-Rey, *Goya's Caprichos: Beauty, Reason & Caricature,* Vol 1 (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1953, reptd. 1970), 136.

an espousal of the Enlightenment and thus as appeal to overturn the unreason of a reactionary Spain.[91] This ambivalence of the pictorial sign which defines the *Caprichos*, and which is further heightened by its conflict with the various verbal signs, mirrors a loss of orientation and meaning within Goya's social and private world. The early commentaries by Goya's contemporaries can thus be seen as attempts to stabilize the meaning of those images by drawing on traditional emblematic or symbolic structures of signification (cf. Schlünder 100). Describing and defining the grotesque images of Goya's fantasy, these commentaries also aim not only at an understanding of the images themselves, but also of the social reality that produced them.

Twentieth century literary and cinematic responses to the *Caprichos* can, in a way, be seen as a continuation of the tradition of these commentaries, that is, as a continued attempt to define these images whose elusiveness and indefiniteness frustrate and resist verbal definition and description. But what does this mean for filmic ekphrasis? Will it have an advantage over literary ekphrasis in providing visual as well as verbal commentary? Or do the *Caprichos* also defy attempts to grasp it through dramatization and theatricalization? On the other hand, would not a statement such as the one cited above that the Caprichos have to be looked at *and* read imply that verbalizations of them are equal in status to the visual images? What format do these responses take: do they attempt to talk about the image, enter into dialog with it, or compete with it – and are different types of responses equally successful in their intermedial transposition of *El*

[91] See C. Christopher Soufas, "'Esto sí que es leer': Learning to Read Goya's *Caprichos*," *Word and Image* 2 (1986): 311.

*sueño de la razón*? A more thorough discussion of Goya's *El sueño de la razón* and its relationship to surrounding verbal discourses will provide a better basis for answering these questions.

## WORD AND IMAGE IN GOYA'S *CAPRICHOS* AND THE *SUEÑO DE LA RAZÓN*

The term "capricho" that gave the title to this series came into vogue in the eighteenth century as an espousal of subjectivity, fantasy, and imagination. The term is also used in the *Diario de Madrid* advertisement, which introduces the works as a collection of prints on "asuntos caprichosos" ("imaginary subjects"). This usage emphasizes the fantastical nature of the collection as well as its artistic license, its "transgress[sion] of accepted artistic conventions" (Schulz 101). In fact, the Dictionary of the *Academia de Bellas Artes* in Goya's times explained the term "capricho" by emphasizing the uncommonness of ideas: "Idea o propósito que uno forma sin razón, fuera de las reglas ordinarias y comunes" ("Idea or proposition that one forms without reason, outside of ordinary and common rules"), and "Obra de arte en que el ingenio rompe con cierta gracia o buen gusto la observancia de las reglas" ("Work of art in which the imagination breaks the observation of the rules with a certain grace or good taste").[92] While the term was used by artists before Goya, such as Jacques Callot (*Capricci di varie figure* [sic.], 1617), Stefano della Bella (e.g. *Caprice*, c. 1642; *Diversi Capricii*, c. 1648; *Raccolta di varii Cappricii,* 1646), Giambattista Tiepolo

[92] The Spanish definitions are cited in F. J. Sánchez Cantón, *Los Caprichos de Goya y sus dibujos preparatorios* (Barcelona: Instituto Amatler de Arte Hispánico, 1949), 8. The English translations are mine.

(*Capricci*, 1743), and Giambattista Piranesi (*Invenzioni capric… di carceri*, c. 1745; *Grotteschi*, 1745-50), Goya was the first to imply a critical purpose, or a social commentary (cf. Hughes 179-80).[93]

This element of social criticism is explicitly present both in the announcement in the *Diario de Madrid*, and in a preparatory drawing for *Capricho* 43, entitled *Sueño* I.[94] In 1797, two years before the publication of the *Caprichos*, Goya had planned a collection of seventy-two plates in which one of the two preparatory drawings for *Capricho* 43, *El sueño de la razón* was supposed to be the head-plate. Not only does the image itself differ visually, but moreover, the inscription and commentary diverge from those of the final *Capricho* plate.[95]

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[93] Jacques Callot was actually the first visual artist to use this term in the title of his series. As Howard Daniel has noted, several Soviet critics "have found in the *Caprices* a record of the contemporary class struggle and in their author a precursor of socialist realism" ("Introduction," Callot's Etchings, ed. Howard Daniel [New York: Dover, 1974] xvi). Lucrezia Harmann in her dissertation *Capriccio – Bild und Begriff* (Nürnberg, 1973) has pointed out that the term was also used to describe literary texts and musical pieces, yet it does not refer to a specific genre but rather describes a group of works with common features (49-55). The earliest literary caprichos are the *Capricciosi ragionamenti* by Pietro Aretino (Paris 1534), the *Capricci, Ragionamenti de le Corti* by Fra Mariano (Venezia 1538) and the *Ragionamenti o Capricci di Giusto bottajo* by G.B. Gelli (Venezia 1546), who have in common a preference for scurrilous, extravagant ideas and a neglect of the rules of poetics in favor of free invention and orginality (49). See also Schulz for a thorough discussion on the use of the term "capricho" in eighteenth-century aesthetic definitions (100-1). Sánchez Cantón also discusses the use of this term in writers and artists who may have influenced Goya's choice of it (7-9).

[94] According to Schulz, there are 28 known Sueño drawings, and "virtually all Sueño drawings provide a basis for plates in *Los Caprichos*" (70). "[Their] organizing principle […] is the notion of cloaking the satire of the contemporary mores and fantastic scenes of witchcraft in the guise of the dreams of the artist, a model surely based […] on the *Sueños* published in 1627 by Francisco de Quevedo (1580-1645) and on the *Sueños morales* published c. 1726 by Diego de Torres y Villarroel (1693-1770)" (70). However, as Andre Stoll emphasizes, all three works, the two *Sueño* drawings and the *Capricho* 43, must be seen as coherent, self-sufficient systems of signification, and in fact, he considers the drawings as superior to the final etching in terms of aesthetic experience (19). See "Goyas Illumionatio – Zum ästhetischen Genesisbericht der Caprichos," *Spanische Bilderwelten: Literatur, Kunst und Film im intermedialen Dialog*, Ed. Christoph Strosetzki and Andre Stoll (Frankfurt a.M.: Vervuert, 1993), 19.

[95] For an interpretation of the visual differences between the first and second version of the *Sueños*, and the *Sueños* and the final *Capricho* 43 see, for example, John J. Ciofalo, "Goya's Enlightenment Protagonist--A Quixotic Dreamer of Reason," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 30.4

The inscription within the drawing, on the artist's desk, reads here: "Ydioma Universal. Dibujo Grabado pr. fco. de Goya año 1797."[96] And the commentary describes the scene in the following terms: "El autor soñando. Su intento solo es desterrar vulgaridades perjudiciales, y perpetuar con esta obra de caprichos, el testimonio sólido de la verdad."[97]

Interestingly, the first part of this handwritten commentary is an almost literal quotation from the most popular encyclopedia of the Spanish Enlightenment, the nine-volume *Teatro crítico universal* by Padre Feijoo. In its second discourse of the fourth volume, he says: "Mi intento solo es desterrar un error vulgar que hay en esta materia y que fomenta mucho su fantasía a la gente de calidad" (qtd. Stoll 31).[98] What is striking about this quotation is its provenance from a popular literary document with which a good part of Goya's

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(1997), 424-26. The first version of the *Sueños* has a large copper plate propped against the side of the chair, "which seems to allude to the etched copy of Velázquez's Margarita of Austria […] that Goya executed himself" (425), thus emphasizing the depiction of himself in this image. In the second version, by contrast, all personal or identifying items are excluded from this drawing, making the figure anonymous, rather than a representation of the artist himself. In other words, Goya is moving from first to third person representation (426).

[96] "Universal Language. Drawing Etched by Francisco de Goya Year 1797." For a thorough discussion of the concept of "Ydioma Universal" (Universal Language), see Bernd Growe, "Ydioma universal. Goya und die Sprachlickeit der Kunst," *Giessener Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte* 7 (1985): 32-56. Growe emphasizes that Goya's use of this term is singular among his contemporaries and implies a claim to universality in several regards: a new hierarchy of the arts in which poetry is no longer the first; an opening of the themes and means for artistic expression; a broadening of the audience, which is no longer only the commissioners, and freedom of artistic language against the fetters of traditional pictorial rhetoric (33-35). However, according to C. Christopher Soufas, Goya's use of the term "universal language" echoes and parodies widely held beliefs in the feasibility of establishing a system of universal communication, an ideographic system like Chinese characters or Egyptian hieroglyphs, that is, a non-alphabetic language accessible to all (315).

[97] "The artist dreaming. His only purpose is to root out harmful ideas, commonly believed, and to perpetuate with this work of Caprichos the soundly based testimony of truth" (Hughes 180). Both Spanish quotes are cited in Helman, *Los Caprichos* 40.

[98] "My only purpose is to root out a popular misconception about this subject and that foments to much the imagination of people of higher rank" (my translation).

audience would probably be familiar. In other words, with this quotation, Goya is placing himself within a tradition of Enlightenment literature, emphasizing the ability of the visual artist to achieve the same goal as the *Ilustrado* writer.

But not only the written commentary on *Sueño I* has a literary model; the series of *Sueños* themselves are modeled on the *Sueños* (1627) by the famous Spanish seventeenth-century satirist Francisco de Quevedo (1580-1645), and on the *Sueños morales* (ca. 1726) by Diego de Torres y Villarroel (1693-1770), both of which are witty, harsh condemnations of Spanish society. Goya's emulation of literary models again underscores his desire to prove that art can be poetry's equal, a claim further indicated by the fact that the final version of *Capricho* 43 shows pen and paper instead of a copper plate. By switching from the materials of a visual artist to the utensils of a writer or poet, Goya emphasizes the poetic status of his work and the equality of both arts (cf. Soufas 316).

Likewise, the *Diario de Madrid* announcement of the *Caprichos*, written by Goya, explicitly places his works in relation to the Horatian maxim of "Ut pictura poesis erit" when he begins:

> "Persuadido el Autor de que la censura de errores y vicios humanos (aunque parece peculiar de la eloquencia [sic.] y la Poesía) puede también ser obgeto (sic.) de la Pintura, ha escogido como asuntos proporcionados para su obra […] aquellos que ha creído mas aptos a suministrar material para el ridículo, y exercitar (sic.) al mismo tiempo la fantasía del artífice."[99]

[99] Francisco Goya, "Colección de estampas de asuntos caprichosos inventadas y grabadas al aguafuerte por Don Francisco Goya" *Caprichos de Goya: una aproximación y tres estudios* (Madrid: Calcografía Nacional, et.al., 1996). The English translation of this passage by Nigel Glendinning reads: "The author is convinced that it is as proper for painting to criticize human error and vice as for poetry and prose to do so, although criticism is usually taken to be exclusively the province of literature. He has selected from amongst the innumerable foibles and follies to be found in any civilized society […] those subjects which he feels to be the most

This allusion to the concept of the sister arts "might have been motivated by the complete absence of graphic satire in Spain, in contrast to the rich satiric tradition in literature" (Schulz 101). Thus, not only does Goya use the term "autor" rather than the more specific "pintor" (painter), but moreover, he explicitly states his intention as amplifying the thematic scope of the visual arts in competition with rhetoric and poetry, whose primacy in the realm of social criticism and satire he disputes. In fact, the *Caprichos* were seen as "sátiras" by several contemporary viewers, a term that was defined around 1800 as a "purely literary genre often written in verse" (Schulz 102). Moreover, Goya emphasizes the ability of his work to ridicule and criticize as well as to stimulate the artistic faculty of imagination, just as the above-mentioned *Teatro critico universal* by Padro Fejoo had done. While criticizing the vices of the vulgar, Goya's work also appeals aesthetically to those with a keen intellect and imagination. This dichotomy between satire and fantasy corresponds to the two modes of seeing I have referred to above, which are represented in the two different self-portraits, plate 1 and plate 43 of the *Caprichos*: observation and imagination.[100] In short, like the *Caprichos* themselves, the announcement is a complex, conflictive document.

López-Rey has linked Goya's conscious entering of a realm that usually belonged to eloquence and poetry to the artist's "desire of putting in writing the

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suitable material for satire, and which, at the same time, stimulate the artist's imagination" (*Goya and his Critics* [New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1977], 49).

[100] As López Vázquez has pointed out, in Plate 1, Goya not only depicts himself as bourgeois, but moreover, he situates this plate in the same place where poets would traditionally situate their likeness, thus again alluding to the concept of the sister arts (*Los Caprichos de Goya y su interpretación* [Santiago de Compostela: Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, 1982], 37-38).

intended meaning of the *Caprichos*" (85). The three main commentaries are generally identified by the location in which they are kept. The commentary which is now in the Prado was long believed to have been composed by Goya, but most scholars now discount that possibility and attribute it to the writer and critic Leandro Fernández de Moratín.[101] The Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid has another commentary written in a more radical style and more crude language than the Prado one. Finally, the Ayala manuscript (named after its first owner) has many literal similarities with the one in the Biblioteca Nacional, but tends to be shorter.[102] Moreover, while the Biblioteca Nacional and the Ayala commentaries often try to nail down the depictions to specific historical characters, the Prado commentary is much more vague and general.[103] On the whole, these commentaries do not coincide in their interpretation of the images. Their semantic pluralism indicates "the difficulty inherent in attempting to translate Goya's

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[101] See René Andioc, "Al margen de los *Caprichos*. Las explicaciones manuscritas," *Nueva Revista de Filologia Hispanica* 33 (1984): 257-84. A few critics still maintain that Goya authored the Prado commentary, such as Volker Roloff, „Zur Beziehung von Bild und Text am Beispiel von Goya, *Caprichos,*" *Spanische Bilderwelten: Literatur, Kunst und Film im intermedialen Dialog*, Ed. Christoph Strosetzki and Andre Stoll (Frankfurt a.M.: Vervuert, 1993), 1-15. As proof of Goya's authorship, he cites the stylistic similarities between the commentary and the captions, and the ironic relationship between commentary and image (3-8). However, Andioc uses this very disparity to argue the opposite, namely that the author of the commentary is represented through his text more as a spectator than as printmaker. Moreover, according to Andioc, the style of P has no similarities to the inscriptions of the preparatory drawings, and much less to Goya's other known writings, such as letters (277-78). However, as Andrew Schulz has pointed out, even if it was not composed by Goya himself, it probably appeared with the artist's consent and, more importantly, for the reader it "establishes an authorial position in relation to the works advertised, regardless of whether Goya himself wrote it" (99).

[102] For a thorough discussion of these manuscripts see Andioc 257-84.

[103] For example, in *Capricho* 5 *Tal para cual*, the Prado commentary is a long paragraph on weather men or women are worse, and speaks of the represented characters simple as "la señorita" and "el pisaverde". Ayala, by contrast, succinctly comments: "Maria Luisa y Godoy" (i.e. the queen and the prime minister), and the Biblioteca Nacional text takes up that identification ("La Reyna y Godoy cuando era Guardia") but expands the description of the plate, making the situation even more specific. (Texts quoted in Helman, *Trasmundo* 214.)

images into textual form" and show how the *Caprichos* "accommodate a range of meanings" (Schulz 118).

In contrast to the more radical-specific stance of the BN manuscript, the Prado commentary generally tends to blunt the visual edge of the *Caprichos*, hiding their real intentions in order to delude the censor by adopting a naïve, harmless tone.[104] As Rene Andioc has shown (278-79), often the Prado commentaries take up a dialog with the captions of the images, for example, *Capricho* 7 is entitled: "Ni así la distingue" ("Even like this he can't make her out"), and the commentary asks: "Cómo ha de distinguirla…" ("How is he supposed to make her out? ..."). Yet, this harmlessness of the Prado commentary is often ironized by the image itself, an irony which indicates the ability of the *Caprichos* to contradict the verbal meaning of their texts. The relationship between text and image here is largely marked by irony, distance, paradox, and an intertextual play with quotes.

This relationship is complicated even more by the fact that Goya has derived many of his themes from literary texts, articles, poems or comedies, attempting to achieve through his prints what the writers achieved through their texts (Helman *Los Caprichos* 42-43 and *Trasmundo* 53).[105] The legend of *Capricho* 43, for example, has been traced to various different literary sources. One is the already mentioned satirist Francisco de Quevedo, whose 1726 edition

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[104] Cf. Oto Bihalji-Merin, *Francisco Goya: Caprichos: Their Hidden Truth*, Trans. John E. Woods. (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981), 13.

[105] Helman discusses in particular a number of literary sources of the donkey series, *Caprichos* 37 to 42 (*Trasmundo* 69-77). According to José Manuel B. López Vázquez, the *Caprichos* as a whole are based on or related to Goya's reading of Erasmus' *L'Eloge de la Folie* and don Diego Saavedra Fajardo's *Idea de un Príncipe Político y Cristiano* (14).

of his *Obras* has a frontispiece that represents the writer asleep, leaning on his table in front of which appears a caption, in the same position as that in Goya's *Capricho*, beginning with the words "Los Sueños de Don Francisco de Quevedo."[106] But the legend could also have been inspired by the poem "A Jovino: el melancólico," one of the *Elegías morales* by Méndez Valdés, a friend of Goya's. Moreover, as George Levitine has shown, the idea represented in this *Capricho* was present in other European writers and can be traced to Horace's *Ars Poetica*. In fact, the beginning of a popular Spanish translation in Goya's time is, in Levitine's words, "a colorful version of Goya's *Capricho* [43]" and, unlike other translations of that text, contains the word "capricho" in its first line.[107]

To further complicate matters, many of the *Caprichos* have an audience in the background, that is, interpreters of the depicted scenes within the scene itself. These spectators often display inappropriate or unfriendly interpretations and are generally contradicted by the verbal commentaries. In other words, neither the verbal commentaries nor the captions are able to translate the image precisely for the viewer/reader, but on the contrary, they further multiply the representational possibilities and indicate "the failure of verbal and iconic signs to function as stable signifying system" (Soufas 318).

But apart from images of viewing and observing, the *Caprichos* also thematize reading itself. However, many of the readers, for example in *Capricho* 29, *Esto sí que es leer* (*This is really reading*), and 70, *Devota profesión* (*Devote*

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[106] Cf. George Levitine, "Some Emblematic Sources of Goya," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 22 (1959): 114.
[107] George Levitine, "Literary Sources of Goya's *Capricho* 43," *Art Bulletin* 37 (1955): 58.

*profession*), have their eyes closed, and their book open in the middle rather than the beginning. These images not only suggest alternative ways of reading, that is, reading with the inner eye of the imagination or fantasy, but they also allow for the possibility of reading in two different directions, from the middle forward or backward, thus pointing to *Capricho* 43 as optimal starting point for the *Caprichos* (cf. Soufas 317-20).

Although widely recognized as the key etching of the series, *El sueño de la razón* has triggered two incompatible interpretations of the *Caprichos* that could be classified into Romantic and Enlightenment positions. While the Enlightenment stance sees the *Caprichos* as a satire on a backward socio-political situation in Spain and as appeal to overturn the rule of ignorance and superstition, the Romantic stance sees them as pictorial criticism of a dogmatic faith in the doctrine of reason. As Soufas has pointed out (311), these two positions are related to the different translations of the title *El sueño de la razón produce monstrous*, in which "sueño" can be either "sleep" or "dream." The translation *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters* emphasizes that the departure from reason is responsible for the monstrous situation in Spain. By contrast, *The Dream of Reason Produces Monsters* indicates that reason, dreaming of its own power, creates a monstrously deformed society.

In the Enlightenment approach, Goya's *El sueño de la razón* represents a rationalist approach to observation and understanding by the contemplation of oneself, imitating the "social satire in dream setting" (López-Rey 100) of famous Enlightenment writers. In this interpretation, the dream is a "useful carrier for

almost any sort of satire" since it grants the author "the innocence as well as the honesty of […] a visionary" (Hughes 180). Recently, however, scholars such as Janis Tomlinson[108] have reexamined the connections between Goya's art and his intellectual and political environment, and have begun to question the Enlightenment-centered scholarship and to reveal the contradictoriness both in Goya's relationship to the Enlightenment and Spanish Enlightenment itself (cf. Schulz 9). Goya's etchings, then, hover between light and shadow, between the rational and the irrational, showing that "[e]l sueño mayor de la razón, el más fantástico e ilusorio acaso, es su imagen del hombre como ser racional. Goya descubre pues, en sus estampas caprichosas el residuo irracional, brutal, monstruoso que queda en el fondo del alma del ser llamado racional" (Helman, *Trasmundo* 95-6).[109]

Consequently, recent scholarship about *Capricho* 43 no longer sees it primarily as Goya's pursuit of man's improvement though education and enlightenment. Volker Roloff has pointed out in response to the Prado commentary on Capricho 43 ("La fantasía abandonada de la razón produce monstruos imposibles: unida con ella, es madre de las artes y orígen de sus marabillas")[110] that the context of the *Caprichos* does not show the positive, tranquillizing ideal of the "wonders" but the power of the "impossible monsters" (6). One of the most extensive reclamations of Goya for a Romantic interpretation

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[108] Janis Tomlinson, *Goya in the Twilight of the Enlightenment* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1992).
[109] "The greatest dream of reason, the most fantastic and illusory, perhaps, is the image of man as rational being. In his capricious plates, Goya discovers the irrational, brutal and monstrous residue left deep down in the soul of the so-called rational being" (my transl.).
[110] Francisco Goya, *Caprichos de Francisco de Goya: una aproximación y tres estudios*, n.p. "Imagination, deserted by reason, begets impossible monsters. United with reason, she is the mother of all arts and the source of their wonders" (my transl.).

is John C. Ciofalo's comparison of Goya's *Capricho* 43 with Cervantes' *Don Quijote*. Claiming that Goya has moved, from the preparatory drawings to the final version, away from Quevedo and to Cervantes' *Quijote*, Ciofalo argues that this image portrays the dream of reason as not only fruitless, but moreover, as dangerously idealistic (422).

*Capricho* 43 obviously has provoked multiple and even incompatible interpretations due to the polyvalence of its iconic signs and the lack of clarification from the verbal discourses around it, such as the caption and the commentaries. Perhaps the reason why so many poets, novelists, dramatists as well as filmmakers continue to be haunted by this image is precisely because it transcends linguistic definitions and verbal logic. Thus, rather than attempting to describe, define or directly interpret this work, writers and filmmakers tend to narrativize and dramatize the image in a dramatic ekphrasis. Recognizing that the *Caprichos* defy verbal description, they turn to invention and imagination, creating their own capricho-like images. In so doing, however, texts and films enter into a new kind of competition with the visual image, taking up the implicit representational challenge.

But what happens to the original conflicts and ambiguities between word and image inherent in the *Caprichos*? Will the filmic interpretation (or dramatization) of that conflict take a different shape due to film's also inherently dual (verbal/auditory and visual) nature? Does film tend to side with the visual against the verbal, or does it further heighten the conflict by adding the competition between pictorial and cinematic signs? Or will the competition be

more explicit in literary texts, since here the need to establish the primacy of the word, its ability to create verbal caprichos, may be greater?

I will attempt to answer these questions in two sets of analyses, both of which compare ekphrases of Goya's *El sueño de la razón* in selected literary texts and films.[111] In the first analysis, I examine the use of dramatic ekphrasis in a German poem (Günter Kunert's "Wenn die Vernunft schläft kommen die Ungeheuer hervor," 1961), a Spanish drama (Antonio Buero Vallejo's *El sueño de la razón*, 1970) and a Spanish film (Carlos Saura's *Goya en Burdeos*, 2000). In the second analysis (Chapter 4), I compare interpretive and dramatic ekphrases of *El sueño de la razón* in Lion Feuchtwanger's novel *Goya oder Der arge Weg der Erkenntnis* (1951) with the film version by Konrad Wolf (*Goya*, 1971). In both cases, ekphrasis is used as a dramatization of the parallel between private-aesthetic and socio-political conflicts, and either demonstrates or questions the artist's power to control such conflicts with his art. However, while in this chapter all three texts use dramatic ekphrases of Goya's aquatint, and animate it in similar ways, chapter four will show how a change of ekphrastic type and point of view in the film results in different interpretations of the aquatint.

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[111] Apart from the texts I discuss, there are several others in which *El sueño de la razón* plays a mayor or minor role, such as Camilo José Cela's story on that etching in *Los Caprichos de Francisco de Goya y Lucientes* (S.L.: Silex, 1989), Alfonso Plou's drama "Goya" (*A la Mesa de los tres reyes: Buñuel, Lorca y Dalí. Goya. Rey Sancho*. Zaragoza: Diputación Provincial de Zaragoza, 2000), Carlos Rojas' novels *Yo, Goya* (Barcelona: Ed. Planeta, 1990) and *Valle de los caidos* (Barcelona: Ed. Destino, 1978), José Camón Aznar's poetic drama Goya (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1976), and John Berger and Nella Bielski's drama *Goya's Last Portrait: The Painter Played Today* (London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1989).

## GOYA'S *EL SUEÑO DE LA RAZÓN* IN A POEM BY GÜNTER KUNERT, A DRAMA BY BUERO VALLEJO, AND A FILM BY CARLOS SAURA

Günter Kunert's poem, Antonio Buero Vallejo's drama and Carlos Saura's film use dramatic ekphrasis of Goya's *El sueño de la razón* in order to create their own "caprichos" in competition with that of Goya, and as a reflection of their criticism of their own contemporary society. Using a montage of *Capricho*-like images, that is, images of nightmare creatures that threaten the artist as well as society, they mark the scene as a visual or verbal dramatization of Goya's *Capricho* 43, and as demonstration of the Prado commentary ("La fantasía abandonada de la razón produce monstruos imposibles: unida con ella es madre de las artes y origin de sus maravillas"). Thus evoking both Goya's aquatint and one of its written commentaries, all three works end with an explicit reference to the artist's ability to root out those monstrous creations through his art, thereby also alluding to Goya's comment on the *Sueño* I, the preparatory drawing for *Capricho* 43. These dramatic ekphrases, the verbal or visual dramatizations of the image and the texts, impose on a painting the writers' and the filmmaker's own attitude toward the function and responsibility of the artist in society.

### Günter Kunert's Poem

Günter Kunert's poem "Wenn die Vernunft schläft kommen die Ungeheuer hervor" ("When reason sleeps, the monsters come forth") is the first of two poems comprised under the title "Zu Radierungen von Goya" ("On Etchings

by Goya,"1961).[112] In both these poems, Kunert focuses on the way in which the painter depicts his society as grotesque and monstrous. Just as Goya's etchings are directed against a corrupt, perverted society, especially in the upper classes, so does Kunert's poem function as a statement against inhuman politics.

The poem on Goya's *El sueño de la razón* is composed in a montage of two types of ekphrases: beginning as a depictive ekphrasis, it shifts to a dramatic one after line eleven.

> Da sitzt der Mensch, den
> Oberkörper übern Tisch gesunken, er Kopf
> Ruht auf dem Bette seiner Arme,
> Und schläft.
>
> Aus dem finsteren Hintergrund dringen die
> Lemuren, Bataillone schattenhafter
> Fledermäuse, Eulen, greisenhaft und tückisch
> Die Gesichter, flattern um den Schläfer.
> Böse Augen, scharfe Krallen, harte Schnäbel.
>
> Wehe, es schläft die Vernunft! (ll. 1-10)[113]

From here on, the speaker continues Goya's aquatint by creating a montage of capricho-like images that goes far beyond what is depicted in the original picture. Whereas the first and last two stanzas focus on the nightmarish

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[112] Günter Kunert, "Zu Radierungen von Goya," *Tagwerke, Gedichte, Lieder, Balladen* (Halle: Mitteldeutscher Verlag, 1961), 85-88. The second of the poems deals with Goya's *Tu que no puedes* (*Capricho* 42), which the poem extends in its title to the full refrain: "Du der Du's nicht kannst, / Trag mich und meinen Wanst." Kunert's work falls into what critics have identified as his first stage of poetic production, a phase generally marked political-didactic poems that attempt to provide guidance for creating a new society in the middle of the chaotic post-war era (Elke Kaspe, *Zwischen Utopie und Apokalypse. Das lyrische Werk Günter Kunerts von 1950 bis 1987* [Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1995], 23).

[113] "There, man sits, his / Upper body bent over the table, his head / Resting in / the bed of his arms, /And sleeps. // From the dark background invade the / Lemurs, battalions of shadowy / Bats, owls, hoary and malicious / Their faces, fluttering about the sleeper / Evil eyes, sharp talons, hard beaks / Woe, should reason sleep!" (All translations from this poem are mine).

creatures of the artist's imagination, the middle part shifts the setting to a social one: the action here takes place in offices, houses, and on the streets. Moreover, the parallel structure of the beginning verses of most stanzas ("Aus dem finsteren Hintergrund" ["From the dark background"]; "Aus den Ämtern" ["From the offices"]; "An den Ecken" ["In the corners"]; "Unter Bäumen" ["Under trees"]) emphasizes the continuity between the aquatint and the ensuing dramatization or animation of capricho-like images that represent the externalized oppression and fear of Goya's *Capricho*.

But here, the threat encompasses people's everyday life, invading their houses, rooms, doors, and cooking pots, and imprisoning people. Moreover, the monsters are now endowed with human characteristics yet retain their inhumanity: they are "voll von Neugier, eiseskalter" ("filled with a curiosity, ice-cold," l.16). This inhumanity is further highlighted by the lack of any human subjects even when human beings are referred to: in "Auf der Straße fällt wer um" ("On the street someone collapses," l.17) the use of the pronoun "wer" (e.g. instead of "jemand") dehumanizes the subject. Likewise the passive mode ("Wird…aufgeschnitten" "is cut open," l. 18) and the impersonal pronoun "man" of the next sentence erase the human subject. The total passivity and absence of human action contrast with the threatening actions of the invading monsters, thus pinpointing the threat to human existence by unreason. This threat to human enlightenment is also underlined by the pink, cigarette smoking dogs whose "immer gleiches / Wedeln" ("ever same / Wagging" ll.25-26) represents the

political opportunism of those indifferent to human fate and only attentive to their own success and advancement (cf. Kaspe 43).

The next part thematizes the artist: "unter Bäumen steht der Maler, auf / den Schultern schwarze Raben" ("Under trees stands the painter, on / His shoulders black ravens," ll. 27-28). These ravens try to pick the painter's eyes, and millepedes crawl over the musician's hands, thus indicating the menace to artistic creation by attacking that body part which is most vital to it. But the poem also extends this thematization of the artist to the writer, an aspect prefigured in Goya's etching, in which the sleeping man has a piece of paper in front of him and is tendered a pencil by the owl at his right shoulder.

> Der Mensch wacht auf und streckt
> Den Leib und reckt die Arme, erhebt
> Den Kopf. Zu End der Schlaf.
> Mit einer Feder bannt der
> Erwachte die Ungeheuer aufs Papier.
>
> Da sinken sie zurück ins Wesenlose,
> Die Fledermäuse schrumpfen ein, die Eulen
> Weinerlich und kahl, fallen zu Boden, rollen
> In die dunklen Ecken, wo sie der
> Schatten schluckt. Die bösen Augen schließen
> Sich, und die drohenden Schnäbel zerfallen wie verbranntes Paper,
> Das noch die Form bewahrt bis es ein
> Hauch trifft. (ll. 39-52)[114]

By using a deliberately ambiguous term, "Feder," which can also refer to a writer's pen, the poem's speaker puts himself in the position of the artist. Unlike

[114] "The man awakes and stretches / His body and extends his arms, lifts / His head. Over is his / sleep. / With a quill the awoken / Bans the monsters onto paper. // There they sink back into immateriality, / The bats shrivel, the owls / Whining and shorn, fall to the ground, roll / Into the dark corners, where they are devoured / By the shadow. The mean eyes / Close and the menacing / Beaks crumble like burned paper, / Which retains its form until scattered by a / Breath."

the musician and the painter, however, the writer is not threatened but takes charge of the situation. In contrast to the dreaming artist, he is able to banish the monsters with his pen. However, the apparent victory of the writer over the painter is debunked by the formal composition of the poem and the obvious irony of these lines, produced by the stylistic disjuncture between the lighthearted language (which jars with the rest of the poem) and the menace. Moreover, the writer's weapon is a mere "Feder," a feather, indicating the immateriality of his power. This is also emphasized by the fact that in bringing something to paper it becomes "[w]esenlos[]," that is, not only immaterial, but also insignificant.. The end of the poem, then, again goes beyond Goya's aquatint in that it shows the monsters disappear, thereby portraying yet another "sueño," the dream of the writer about the power of his own art. However, the *paragone* ends with the text undermining itself, indicating the skepticism about its own possibilities and questioning the writer's superiority.

Kunert does not present himself here as "writer who speaks emphatically about reason and who advocates unceasingly the future of the enlightened human being" (Kaspe 43, my transl.).[115] On the contrary, I would argue that this poem already prefigures the skepticism of his later poems, especially those in his collection *Abtötungsverfahren* (1980) that question the power and efficacy of poetry itself (e.g. "Eine Poetik"). Moreover, Kunert's interpretation of Goya's *Capricho* 43 can also be seen as an oblique interpretation and criticism of his own post-war GDR society. As Manfred E. Keune has pointed out, dream and reality

[115] " In diesem Gedicht zeigt sich Kunet als ein Schriftsteller, der im emphatischen Sinn von Vernunft spricht und unbeirrbar für die Zukunft des aufgeklärten Menschen eintritt."

have not a separating but a complementary function for Kunert.[116] Thus, the images of unreason that extend rather than describe Goya's *Capricho* 43 also represent Kunert's vision of life in the GDR, thereby prefiguring his later open criticism.[117] Just as Goya presented his criticism of the vices and corruption of his own society in veiled form through the disjuncture between the images and the commentaries, so does Kunert veil his own verbal, poetic criticism through his ekphrasis of a visual image in order to show that the social corruption as well as the political censure are as relevant for him as they were for Goya.

**Buero Vallejo's Drama**

This ambiguity about an enlightenment interpretation of the *Sueño de la razón* also marks the second text that animates Goya's *Capricho* 43 in a dramatic ekphrasis, Antonio Buero Vallejo's play *El sueño de la razón* (1970).[118] Buero Vallejo had started as a more conventional playwright in the early fifties, but began to turn to actual historical events as subject matter for his plays in 1958 with *Un soñador para un pueblo* (*A Dreamer for a People*). A drama about the

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[116] Manfred E. Keune, „Günter Kunert," *Deutsche Dichter des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Ed. Hartmut Steinecke (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1994), 748.

[117] Kunert was officially recognized in the GDR until 1963, when criticism of his work began as he started to reveal contradictions in the socialist state. In 1977 his membership in the SED, the GDR's party, was cancelled, and in 1979 he received a visa to move to West Germany. He had already published several of his works in the West during the 1960s and 1970s, and had been well-received there since his poetry collection *Aus fünfzehn Jahren* (*From Fifteen Years*) in 1963 (see Keune 742-57; Manfred Durzak and Hartmut Steinecke, "Einleitung," *Günter Kunert: Beiträge zu seinem Werk*, eds. Manfred Durzak and Hartmut Steinecke (München and Wien: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1992), 11.

[118] Antonio Buero Vallejo, *El tragaluz. El sueño de la razón* (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1970). The play has been translated into English by Marion Peter Holt as *The Sleep of Reason* (University Park: Estreno, 1998).

Esquilache riots of 1766, the play "conveyed an oblique but unmistakable political message."[119] Two years later, Buero composed his first drama about a painter and his most famous work: *Las meninas* (1960). Depicting Velázquez as a man concerned with social injustices and associated with instigators of social rebellion, Buero was virulently accused of misrepresenting the seventeenth-century Spanish artist's character and the relationship between him and the king. More explicitly than in his first historical drama, Buero reflects here on contemporary social conditions during the mid-Franco era such as state censorship, through recognizable historical parallels (cf. Holt viii). Of Buero's four historical plays, only *El sueño de la razón* has been staged extensively and with great popularity since its first representation.[120]

As Marion Peter Holt has noted, "Buero's plays frequently draw upon and refer to actual works of art, even beyond the specific scenes where a painting or etching is turned into a dramatic action developing from an onstage replication of the work" (xi), as is the case both in *Las meninas* and *El sueño de la razón*. But while the earlier play does not show any actual paintings but rather evokes them through tableau vivants of the characters, *El sueño de la razón* projects all fourteen of Goya's *Pinturas negras* in the backdrop, and represents various images, among them *El sueño de la razón*, in form of tableau vivants.

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[119] Marion Peter Holt, "Introduction," in *Las Meninas: A Fantasia in Two Parts*. By Antonio Buero Vallejo. Ed. and Trans. Marion Peter Holt (Trinity: Trinity UP, 1987), viii.

[120] In fact, Marion Peter Holt in his note "About the Playwright" claims that it is his "most widely performed play," citing various international productions in "Rostock, Moscow, Budapest, Oslo, Tokyo, and in Warsaw by the acclaimed director Andrzej Wajda. The English version had its professional premiere at Baltimore's Center Stage in 1984 and has also been staged in Philadelphia (1986), London (1991) and Chicago (1994)." (*Sleep* ix).

The drama takes place in December 1823, the year in which Goya finished his *Pinturas negras* (1820-23). John Dowling indicates the relationship between these *Black paintings* and the etching and drama's title *El sueño de la razón* when he remarks that the *Pinturas negras* "are anticipated by earlier works and represent the disillusionment and dashed hopes for a new Spain which didn't come about because reason was asleep and monsters took over."[121] At this time in the drama, the oppressive regime of King Fernando VII endangers the artist's life, as he is suspected of relationships with Enlightenment intellectuals, liberals and freemasons, all of whom were threatened "under the restored rule of the archreactionary Bourbon Fernando VII" (Hughes 268). The king, upon returning to the throne after Napoleon's defeat, "abolished the 1812 Constitution and set in train an iron policy of repression, censorship, inquisitorial tyranny, and royal absolutism" (Hughes 273). Buero's Goya, who is considered a liberal, stubbornly denies the threat he lives in, yet the drama represents his subconscious fear through the *Pinturas negras* on which he is working. Goya's terror is also represented in the drama by heart beats, sounds and voices that only Goya and the audience hear.[122] This so- called "efecto de inmersión" (immersion effect) by which the playwright seeks to draw the spectator into an actual physical experience analogous to that of a character on stage, is also used to convey

[121] John Dowling, "Buero Vallejo's interpretation of Goya's 'Black Paintings,'" *Hispania* 56.2 (1973). Goya painted the *Pinturas negras* on the walls of his last home in Madrid, the "Quinta del Sordo." These oil paintings were removed from the walls in 1874, and in the process "a certain amount of editing and 'correction' went on at the hands of the restorer (Hughes 17).
[122] Cf. John Dowling, "Buero Vallejo's interpretation of Goya's 'Black Paintings,'" *Hispania* 56.2 (1973): 449-457.

Goya's deafness, as the play contains several instances of absolute silence in which the audience is plunged into Goya's mind.[123]

But the sounds and voices are not merely a scenic representation of Goya's hallucination or madness. Rather, they translate into dramatic language the nightmares and fantasies of Goya's visual realm, his etchings, drawings and paintings. Likewise, Buero exploits the narrativity and dramaticality of Goya's titles, mostly from the *Caprichos* and the *Desastres de la guerra*, many of which appear as fragments of a dialog (cf. Monti 779). Especially during the two central scenes I will discuss below in more detail, in which Goya is first attacked by imaginary creatures and then by five "Royal Volunteers," a troop sent by the king, the quotation of titles from the *Caprichos* and the *Desastres de la guerra* such as "Trágala, perro" ("Swallow it, dog") or "Y son fieras" ("And they are wild") functions as a dramatic means of verbally evoking and reinforcing visual images of horror, violence and fear.

Although the only visual images that are directly shown are the fourteen *Pinturas negras* which are projected onto the background, the drama on the whole functions like an ekphrasis of the *Capricho* etching which gives it its title, *El sueño de la razón*, which is also dramatized in a key scene. In other words, Buero's play on the whole can be seen as a dramatic ekphrasis which contains another dramatic ekphrasis within it. The drama represents a socio-political nightmare in which reason sleeps and unreason and terror, embodied by the

[123] This "efectos de inmersión" was first discussed by Ricardo Doménech, *El teatro de Buero Vallejo* (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1973), 49-52. However, as Holt indicates, "Buero himself had already referred to the procedure by the more encompassing term "interiorización" (xv). On this effect specifically in *El sueño de la razón*, see Silvia Monti, "Goya en las tablas. *El sueño de la razón* de Buero Vallejo," *Anales de la Literatura Española Contemporánea* 23.3 (1998): 778.

King's minister Calomarde, take over. But the drama has also been described as "un sueño de rebeldía frente a una situación opresora,"[124] that is, as the artist' dream of his art as a tool of rebellion against the reign of unreason and terror. However, rather than discussing how the drama as a whole ekphrastically transcribes Goya's *Sueño de la razón*, I will focus on the dramatization of this etching in its key scene. This scene thus not only represents an ekphrasis within an ekphrasis, but also a mini-drama within the drama, in other words, a "metadrama […] acted out within Goya's mind."[125]

At the beginning of this scene, Goya is shown sitting "en la misma postura que dio a su cuerpo en el aguafuerte famoso" (Buero 194; "in the same position in which he represented his body in the famous aquatint," my transl.),[126] when he is attacked by several monstrous creatures (a bat-man, two pig figures, a horned figure, and a cat figure) who end up muzzling him and condemn him for various charges: "Por judío, masón, liberal, jacobino, insolente, impertinente, reincidente, pintor, masturbador, grabador…" (*Sueño* 198; "Declared a Jew, mason, liberal, insubordinate, impertinent, incorrigible engraver, painter, masturbator," *Sleep* 52). Although the scene thus acquires political implications, which are further highlighted by the creatures' references to their support of the king, the scene as a whole clearly is a "sueño," a dream. But this internal, psychological oppression by creatures of the artist's imagination is mirrored by a very real parallel scene of

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[124] Jesus Rubio Jiménez, "Goya y el teatro español contemporáneo. De Valle-Inclán a Alberti y Buero Vallejo," *Anales de la Literatura Española Contemporánea* 24.3 (1999). ("A dream of rebellion against an oppressive situation," my transl.)

[125] Alison J. Ridley, "Goya's Rediscovery of Reason and Hope: The Dialectic of Art and Artist in Buero Vallejo's *El sueño de al razón*," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 73.1 (1996), 110.

[126] Marion Peter Holt translates this passage more liberally: "In lamplight, resting on his arms at the far left of the table – and in the same position as in the famous etching – Goya dozes." (50).

political tyranny, in which Goya is tortured by five Royal Volunteers sent by the king, who appear immediately after the bestiary has disappeared. After muffling, fettering and beating Goya, they raid his house and rape Leocadia.

The dramatization of *El sueño de la razón* is thus a mirror scene to the following one of real torture. Moreover, the sequence is not only an ekphrasis within an ekphrasis itself, but contains further interactions between words and images on at least three different levels, which may qualify as additional ekphrases within the ekphrasis of the *Sueño de la razón,* and which contribute to its meaning. First, the direct quotation of the captions of several etchings from the *Caprichos* and the *Desastres de la guerra* by various characters, are an instance of attributive ekphrasis that visually evokes those images and invites comparison between these etchings and the action of the drama. Second, as in the rest of Buero's drama, several of the *Pinturas negras* are projected in the background of this scene. Through this attributive ekphrasis, Buero provides additional visual commentary. Third, the scene depicts several works or characters from Goya's works in tableau vivants. Not only are many of the creatures animations of paintings, drawings or etchings by Goya, but moreover, Goya himself is forced to represent one of his own paintings.

The sequence of the two scenes in which *El sueño de la razón* is dramatized is the only one in the drama in which captions of Goya's etchings (the *Caprichos* and the *Desastres*) are quoted and constitute much of the dramatic dialog between Goya and the creatures of his fantasy. Significantly, it is mostly the demonic creatures of Goya's dreams and the voices he hears that quote his

works, rather than his mistress Leocadia or the Royal Volunteers. One exception, however is the slogan sung by both the beasts and the soldiers: "¡Trágala perro! / ¡Tu francmasón! / ¡Tu que no quieres / Inquisición!" (197, 198, 202; "Swallow it, dog! / You freemason! / You who don't want / Inquisition!" my transl.).[127] This slogan directly quotes *Capricho* 58, *Trágala perro* (*Swallow it, dog*), in which a man is about to be injected with an enormous syringe. The Prado commentary to this image points out that living among men means being injected irremediably,[128] a metaphor which in Buero's play becomes cruel reality as Goya is hit with the sabers of the Royal Volunteers. The slogan also alludes to *Capricho* 42, *Tu que no puedes* (*You who cannot do it*) But while this etching, which illustrates the refrain "Tu que no puedes, llévame a cuestas," ("You who cannot do it, carry me on your shoulders") is an attack against the oppression of the weak and poor by the upper classes and the clergy, the modification of the caption points to its ironical inversion: The monsters as well as the Royal Volunteers are the oppressors and the inquisitors against whom Goya rebels in his *Caprichos*, but in front of whom he is ultimately as helpless and defenseless as the lower class subjects of his

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[127] The more liberal English translation by Marion Peter Holt reads: "Swallow it dog! Dirty Freemason! You wanted to end the Inquisition!" (52). The slogan itself and the fact that they sing a slogan at all may be a reference to the ultraroyalists who terrorized the Spanish streets after the second restoration of Fernando VII in 1922. Their slogan "Long live the Absolute King! Death to the Frenchies! Long live religion! Death to politics! Long live the Inquisition!" (qtd. in Hughes 378) is here directed especially against Goya's stance against the Inquisition and the Church as represented in some of his Caprichos. Furthermore, the slogan is also parodied by Buero when he has one of the beasts exclaim "¡Viva el rey absolutamente absoluto!" (*Sueño* 196; "Long live the absolutely absolute King!" *Sleep* 52).

[128] "El que viva entre los hombres sera geringado irremediablemente, si quiere ebitarlo abra de irse a abitar los montes, y cuando esté alli conocera q$^{e}$. esto de vivir solo es una geringa" (Goya, *Caprichos*, n.p.) ["He who lives among men will be injected irremediable, if he wants to avoid it, he will have to go live in the mountains, and when he is there, he will realize that living alone is a syringe," my transl.]

etchings. Both images are thus ironically turned around, against the painter himself.

During the attack of the Royal Volunteers, most of the quotes come from the *Desastres de la guerra* (1810-1820)[129] and are uttered by various male and female voices as well as by Goya himself. Like the *Capricho* quotes, they turn the irony of the etchings' captions against the painter himself. As Leocadia is raped by the sergeant in front of Goya, a wild noise of animals breaks out ("chillidos de las alimañas, […], rebuznos, cacareos, carcajadas, estremecedores alaridos," 203),[130] together with a loud heart beat. In between, various voices are heard:

> Voz femenina. – (*Irónica*.) "¡Tal para cual!"
> Voz masculina. – (*Indignada*.) "¡No se puede mirar!"
> (*Goya desvía la vista y la pierde en el vacío*.)
> Voz femenina. – "¡Se aprovechan!"
> Voces femeninas. – (*Sobre las risas*.) "¡Y son fieras! ¡Y son fieras!"…
> Voz masculina. – "¡Y no hay remedio!"
> Voces femeninas. – "¡Y son fieras!"…
> Voz masculina. – "¿Por qué?"… (204)[131]

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[129] The *Desastres de la guerra,* in Hughes words "the greatest anti-war manifesto in the history of art" (304), were not published until 1863, nearly half a century after they were begun. Their original full title reads *Fatales consequencias de la sangrienta guerra en España con Buonaparte. Y otros caprichos enfáticos* (*Fatal consequences of the bloody war against Bonaparte in Spain. And other emphatic caprices*). Goya refrained from publishing them during Fernando VII's regime (and in fact, during his own lifetime), realizing that his prints would be too offensive. Not only do the fifteen "caprichos enfaticos" attack the "disaster of piece" (273) of Fernando VII's regime, but the rest of the *Desastres* denounce the brutality of war as such, and are neither pro-French nor pro-Spanish. Thus, "this vast and laborious act of public contrition for the barbarity of its author's own species[,] remained unknown and had no effect whatsoever on European consciousness for two generations after it was finished" (304.). Incidentally, Goya's *Desastres* of a war against the French have a French precursor, Jacques Callot's *Les Misères et les Malheurs de la Guerre* (1633), to which his work is often compared (see, for example, the publication *Fatal Consequences: Callot, Goya, and the Horrors of War*. Hanover, N.H.: Dartmouth College, 1990).

[130] "Shrieks, brays, crowing, and terrifying howls are added to the continuing heartbeats" (*Sleep* 57)

[131] "Female voice: (ironic) "Two of a kind!" / Male voice: (Indignant) "It's forbidden to watch!" (Goya averts his eyes and gazes into emptiness.) / Female voice: "Take advantage of the moment!" / Female voices: (Over the laughter) "And they are like animals!" "And they are like animals!" / Male voice: "There's no hope now." / Female voices: "And they are like animals!" /

While the first phrase ("Tal para qual," "Two of a kind") is from *Capricho* 5, the rest of the "dialog" comes from the *Desastres*. *No se puede mirar* (*One cannot look*, Plate 26) portrays the desperation, grief and pleading of the victims, many of whom are women, about to be shot by the French soldiers who are represented only metonymically through the pointing end of their rifles at the right.[132] Inspiring compassion for the victims and indignation for the heartless murdering, this image is used ambiguously in this scene. Taken by itself it indicates the indignation of the male voice about the cruelty of the rape. But in the context of the dialog, as answer to "Tal para qual" ("Two of a kind"), it seems to express rather an indignation about both their behavior and Leocadia's supposed consent to or provocation of the rape, since this *Capricho* image shows a flirting couple and its commentary emphasizes that both men and women are equal in their vices and perversions.[133]

Similarly ambiguous is the use of *Se aprovechan* (*They avail themselves*, Plate 16) in this scene. In Goya's etching, soldiers are seen raiding corpses for clothes and valuables. This image of disrespect against the dead is here used in

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Male voice: "Why?" (*Sleep* 57) – In what follows, however, I use the more common translations of Goya's titles (following for the most part Robert Hughes), which in many cases differ from those provided by Marion Peter Holt in the above translation.

[132] As Hughes has noted about this painting, the absence of executioners makes the "threat of their presence" all the greater, which for Hughes creates "an astonishingly cinematic effect" as it announces the expected killer from offstage (318).

[133] "Muchas veces se ha disputado si los hombres son peores q$^{e}$. las mugeres, ò lo contrario. Los vicios de unos y otros vienen de la mala educación. Donde quiera q$^{e}$. los hombres sean perversos las mugeres lo seran también. Tan buena cabeza tiene la señorita q$^{e.}$ se representa en esta estampa como el pisaverde q$^{e}$ la esta dando combersacion; y en quanto à las dos viejas, tan infame es la una como la otra." (Goya, *Caprichos* n.p.). ["Many times it has been argued whether men are worse than women or the other way around. The vices of the former, as well as those of the latter, come from bad upbringing; wherever men be wicked so would be women. The young lady in this plate has as good a mind as the fop talking to her, and as for the two old women, one is as vile as the other," Lopez-Rey 188].

two ways. On the one hand, the phrase is taken literally, indicating that Leocadia and the sergeant benefit from each other and thereby implying what Goya also thinks, namely that his mistress is in league with the sergeant. On the other hand, *Se aprovechan* is also used as a mirror of the rape and the raiding of the house, pointing to the equivalence of violence during the War of Independence against France (1808-1814) and the reign of terror under Fernando VII (and, by extension, perhaps also that of Franco during Buero's career).

The next phrase, the most repeated one in this dialog, *Y son fieras* (*And they are like wild animals,* Plate 5), quotes one of many *Desastres* images which represent "[t]he bravery of women in the defense of their home territory" (Hughes 288). But again, Buero's use of it in this scene points to an ambiguity produced by a disjuncture between the image and the caption. A depiction of women "hurling themselves in Medea-like fury on the invaders with whatever weapons came to hand" (ibid.), its quotation in this dialog underscores the threat of women to men. Thus pointing to Goya's fear that Leocadia is responsible for bringing the intruders into the house, this quotation also visualizes a woman's retaliation and revenge and Goya's view of his mistress as an actively provoking participant in the aggression, rather than its passive, suffering victim.

Paradoxically then, Buero's Goya is identifying with the French soldiers of the etching, that is, with the enemy and aggressor, rather than the victim. This contradiction again emphasizes Buero's portrayal of the artist's inability to harmonize with and find himself in his works, and points to Goya's personal and artistic conflicts in addition to his political one. Here, he is depicted as at odds

with the perspective represented in his *Desastres*, a perspective which throughout sympathizes with the victims, be they Spanish or French, and condemns the cruelty and barbarity of the assailants on both sides.

The two other images quoted in this dialog, *Y no hai remedio* (*And there is no remedy*, Plate 15 and *¿Por qué?* (*Why?*, Plate 32) are both responses to the phrase and quote of "Y son fieras." Both these etchings represent defenseless victims being tortured or about to be shot by the French aggressors, images which in this scene indicate Goya's helplessness in front of the *Royal Volunteers*. Yet, as a response to "Y son fieras" these quotes also point to Goya's mistrust of Leocadia, and thus also become a statement about women and their uncontrollable sexuality, questioning Leocadia's motives and her honesty. Significantly, during this rape scene not one of the three depictions of rape in the *Desastres* is quoted.[134] The victim as depicted through the visual quotes is clearly the artist himself, not the woman who is raped. The quotes are thus not dialogical voices in Goya's head, but rather, they represent entirely his own perspective, his feelings of violation and betrayal, and his ambiguity and doubts about Leocadia's role. Applying the situations depicted in his etchings to his own circumstances, Buero's Goya not just sympathizes, but completely identifies with the victims they portray, losing the objectivity of the observer's stance.

In the nineteenth century, this series had created a new form of pictorial eye-witnessing, "that of a vivid, camera-can't-lie pictorial journalism long before the invention of the camera, of art devoted to reportage […]" (Hughes 272). But

[134] These are: *No quieren* (*They don't want it*), Plate 9; *Tampoco* (*Nor do these*), Plate 10; and *Ni por ésas* (*Nor those*), Plate 11.

this unflinching and seemingly impartial viewer stance as represented in the caption *Yo lo vi* (*I saw it*, Plate 44) is balanced off by Goya's technique of associating the viewer of the print with the onlookers in the depicted events. Representing the scenes at eye-level, the viewer seems to become an onlooker and eye-witness himself, positioned in the midst of the action.[135] Thus inducing a viewer stance closer to the emotional response of horror and dismay as portrayed in the etching *No se puede mirar* (*One cannot look*, Plate 26), Goya does not allow the viewers of his prints to settle on an objective, detached observer stance, but points to the permeable border between the onlooker-witness and the victims of violence.

Buero's Goya, however, gets enmeshed in his own game of observing stances in the *Desastres*. In this drama, Goya himself is unable to maintain the position of the detached reporter-observer of the verbal captions, but increasingly becomes his own representations, that is, the affected victims he depicted. Not only does Buero's Goya thus refunction his paintings to confirm his suspicions of Leocadia, but moreover, in expressing his apprehensions through visual evocations of his paintings, he uses his works as a way of avoiding a direct confrontation of his fears. The representation of four of Goya's *Pinturas negras* (*Viejos comiendo sopas*, *Judith*, *Saturno*, and the *Aquelarre*) during this sequence further underscores what Buero interprets in this drama as Goya's loss of control and his inability to come to terms with his identity through his art. This

[135] Cf. Reva Wolf, "Onlooker, Witness and Judge in Goya's *Disasters of War*," *Fatal consequences: Callot, Goya, and the Horrors of War* (Hanover, N.H.: Dartmouth College, 1990), 37-52, here esp. 43.

interpretation also points to Buero's use of dramatic ekphrasis as a tool for portraying the author's dominance over the painter.

At the beginning of the scene, when we see Goya sitting at his table, a large version of the *Viejos comiendo sopas* (*Old Men Eating Gruel*) is projected in the background. A little further on, with the painting still looming behind the action, Goya explicitly refers to the painting when he defends himself saying "Yo sólo quiero comer sopas" (195; "I only want to eat soup," my transl.[136]). Thus attempting to demonstrate his innocence and defenselessness, he seeks to identify with one of his *Pinturas negras* while being forced into representing one of his *Caprichos*. Not only does this mis-identification show the artist in conflict with his work, but also with his own identity. Classified by John Dowling as one of the *Pinturas negras* used by Buero to comment on Goya's personality rather than on Spain or Goya's destiny,[137] the *Viejos comiendo sopas* functions here as direct contrast to the political interpretation Buero gives to *El Sueño de la razón*. While Buero's Goya is trying to avoid any political implications of his actions and paintings, his involuntary enactment of *El sueño de la razón* will force him to realizing his blindness and the impossibility of a retreat into privacy.

As the beasts from the first *Sueño* disappear and the Royal Volunteers take over, three of the *Pinturas negras* are projected at once: *Saturno* (*Saturn devouring his son*), *Aquelarre* (*Witches' Sabbath*), and *Judith* (*Judith and*

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[136] Marion Peter Holt translates this phrase as "I only want to live my life" (51), thus foregoing the allusion to the painting.

[137] John Dowling has identified three different uses of the *Pinturas negras* in Buero's drama: five paintings comment on Goya's personality and his relationship with his mistress Leocadia; seven express the artist's vision of Spain of his day; and two affirm Goya's own destiny and integrate the meaning of the collection as a whole (450).

*Holofernes*) Rather than confirming Goya's "loca esperanza" (*Sueño* 199; "wild hope," *Sleep* 53) of being freed, these paintings are a bleak foreboding of more violence and yet another nightmare. As Dowling has shown, Buero uses *Saturno* here in keeping with art historical interpretations of its iconography, as reference to the king who "destroys those who should have benefited from [him]," since Fernando VII now turns on "those very people who helped to restore him, in 1814, to the Spanish throne" (453). The *Aquelarre* represents another reference to the king as he-goat under whose command the demonic creatures, that is, the Royal Volunteers, reap their havoc. The prominence of this painting throughout Buero's drama, and its enlargement at the end of the scene, when the other two paintings disappear, indicates that Buero sees the *Aquelarre* as representative of Goya's Spain, his world of horror and cruelty.

Finally, the representation of the painting *Judith* links the second to the first nightmare, since the first scene ends with Leocadia, Goya's mistress, as the "brazo secular" (*Sueño* 198; "secular arm," *Sleep* 53) to which the beasts want to give over Goya for execution. In fact, Leocadia, "ataviada como la Judith de la pintura y con su gran cuchillo en la mano" (*Sueño* 198; "dressed as Judith of the painting and with a great knife in her hand," *Sleep* 53), is about to decapitate the artist when they are interrupted by the noise of the intruding Royal Volunteers. Although the tableau vivant of this painting of *Judith* in the first scene is thus "frozen" back from life into art in the second scene, its continuing presence emphasizes the ongoing threat to Goya. Moreover, this confrontation again underscores a conflict between the artist and his art, as he is almost being

decapitated by one of his own paintings come alive. These projections of the *Pinturas negras* in the background during the dramatization of the *Sueño de la razón* thus further underscore Goya's conflict in attempting to use his art as a means of avoiding to directly confront his fears. Likewise, the animation of various other paintings into tableau vivants points to the disjuncture between the artist and his art.

Throughout the first dramatization of the *Sueño de la razón*, some of the nightmarish beasts can be traced to various paintings by Goya. For example, the "Horned figure" who seems to be the leader of this bestiary, proceeds from Goya's *El entierro de la Sardina* (*The Burial of the Sardine*, 1814) (cf. Monti 785). This painting represents a carnival scene, an inverted world of masks that may be taken as an allusion to the state of Spain under Fernando VII.[138] The masks of distorted, grotesque looking faces recur in the faces of the "animal-like caricatures" of the *Pinturas negras* (Hofmann 198), a connection which in this drama emphasizes the allusion to Fernando VII's reign of terror. But more importantly, the depiction of Goya's torture by creatures from his own paintings as a scene of carnival also points to the inverted relationship between him and his works, whose rebellion against and threat to the painter underscores the dissonance in Goya's current artistic, personal and political identity.

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[138] Werner Hofmann, in *Goya: To every story there belongs another*, trans. by David H. Wilson (London: Thames & Hudson, 2003), p. 198, has suggested this interpretation with regard to three similar works, dating from the same period: The *Procession of Flagellants* (c. 1812-19), an *Inquisition Scene* (c. 1812-19), and the *Madhouse* (c. 1812-19). Since it also dates from the Restoration period, I think this interpretation can be extended at least in part to *The Burial of the Sardine*.

By thus portraying Goya's helplessness and dominance by his own works, Buero also emphasizes his own power over the painter. It is through Buero's dramatic ekphrasis that these works have come alive to torture the painter. The power of the writer over his creature Goya thus contrasts with the painter's lack of power over his creations. The ekphrases in this drama therefore are strongly embedded in the tradition of the paragone, the competition for superiority. Buero's use of ekphrasis, then functions here as tool to underscore his dominance and the supremacy of his dramatic medium over the painter and his creations.

Moreover, Goya himself is, once again, forced into representing yet another of his paintings, when the Royal Volunteers dress him up like "uno de los penitenciados que él grabó y pintó tantas veces" (*Sueño* 202; "one of the penitents he engraved and painted so many times," *Sleep* 56).[139] Goya's visual transformation into a condemned in front of an inquisitorial tribunal mirrors the mock trial of the beasts in the previous scene, at the beginning of which he attempted in vain to identify with the *Viejos comiendo sopas* rather than with the *Sueño de la razón*. Here, he is again forced into becoming one of his paintings against his will. However, when the soldiers have left and Goya's daughter-in-law Gumersinda first and then the priest, Padre Duaso, try to take the *sambenito*, "the penitent's gown of the Inquisition" (*Sleep* 54), off, he refuses. Through his enactment of and identification with his paintings, he has become aware of his own guilt and responsibility. Once again he points to his identification with the *Viejos comiendo sopas*, yet now he clearly sees its relationship to the *Sueño de la*

[139] For example in *Inquisition Scene*, ca. 1812-19, Madrid: Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, or in *Capricho* plate 23, *Aquellos polbos*.

*razón* and his own involvement in and responsibility for the social and political reality: "Ya no soy más que un viejecico engullesopas. Un anciano al borde del sepulcro […] Un país al borde del sepulcro…cuya razón sueña…" (211).[140] Here, finally, he extends his identification with his works to one with his country and admits to his own "sleep of reason." His paintings, imbued with a life of their own, have taught him about "the ability of the creative act to free man from moral blindness" (Ridley 108).

To Goya's reflection, a male voice in the air, heard only by the protagonist and the spectators, responds with another quote from the *Caprichos*: "Si amanece, nos vamos" (*Capricho* 71; "If it dawns, we will go away"), which represents various old, ugly, witch-like women (identified in the Ayala and Biblioteca Nacional manuscripts as "alcahuetas," "go-betweens") at a meeting in the middle of the night. This quote is repeated by various male and female voices throughout the rest of the play, increasingly loud until the drama ends when, in the middle of that deafening noise the light goes out, and an enlarged projection of the *Aquelarre* (*The Witches' Sabbath*) is seen in the background. Buero uses this quote as an answer to the enactment of the *Sueño de la razón,* representing Goya's realization that the return of the light of reason (both within himself and in his country) will make the monstrous creatures disappear. Thus, the enactment of the *Sueño de la razón* clearly has a cathartic function for the painter and protagonist of the play, leading to his (personal and political) awakening of reason

[140] "I am no more than a soup-ladling old man. An old man at the edge of the grave. […] A country at the edge of the grave…whose reason sleeps…" (my transl.) – Marion Peter Holt translates the first sentence here as "I'm just a feeble old man" (61), again deleting the allusion to Goya's *Viejos comiendo sopas*.

and to reconciliation with his art, his identity, and his surroundings. Reaching inner enlightenment and self-knowledge, he is now able to acknowledge his own blindness and to accept responsibility for and take control of his circumstances.

Yet, the final image for the spectator is one of darkness and horror as the play ends not with the light of reason but with the gloom of the *Witches' Sabbath*, which provides a visual answer to the verbal quote of "Si amanece nos vamos": There will be no dawn, and the monsters will not leave. But Buero underlines the powerful presence of the irrational even in these very voices which announce the hope for a dawn of enlightenment. In increasing volume, this "confusion de voces avanza como un huracán sobre la sala entera" (*Sueño* 213; "the confusion of voices advances like a hurricane on the entire theatre," *Sleep* 64), making palpable their continuing existence and their threat to hope and reason. The complex interplay of the visual and the verbal, of various forms of ekphrasis within the ekphrasis of the *Sueño de la razón*, then, underscores the central ambiguity of the play, which critics have so far not recognized.[141] While Buero's interpretation of the *Sueño de la razón* does portray art as personal means of leading to inner enlightenment, it also stresses art's ultimate helplessness against the social and political sleep of reason and the monsters produced by an irrational government and a superstitious populace.

In both Buero Vallejo's drama and Kunert's poem, then, the dramatic ekphrasis of *El sueño de la razón* takes up the elusiveness and ambiguity of

[141] For example, for Alison Ridley, "[i]t is the progressive vivification and dramatization of art by way of the painter's imagination and the ensuing dialectic that evolves between art and artist, that will reconcile Buero's Goya with his almost dormant reason and enlighten him to the true meaning of tragic hope (106).

Goya's aquatint and of the text-image relationship in the *Caprichos*. And in both cases, the power of the artist to banish unreason and irrationality with his art is posited as well as questioned, thus also alluding to the Prado commentary, "Imagination, deserted by reason, begets impossible monsters. United with reason, she is the mother of all arts and the source of their wonders." Through the creation of parallel textual-dramatic "caprichos," Kunert and Buero show that Goya's aquatint, though defying verbal description, is yet capable of dramatization. In particular, Buero's compound, multiple ekphrasis of visual and verbal quotations takes up Goya's challenge of intermingling visual and verbal elements and of bringing them in interaction and competition with each other. Does the inherently dual nature of film, then, also make it suited as a means of ekphrastic transposition that transforms the visual-verbal ambiguities into filmic language?

**Carlos Saura's Film**

The Spanish filmmaker Carlos Saura had been pursued by the idea of making a film about Goya since he was eighteen, and when he was later offered to participate in a series of films about famous artists he proposed Goya, but the project was never finished.[142] The idea of making a film about Goya in Bordeaux came from a book on that subject by Jacques Fauqué and Ramón Villanueva (Saura, *Goya* 7). But at the same time, this film was a sort of homage to another Spanish filmmaker, Luis Buñuel, who also wrote a screenplay on Goya which he

[142] Carlos Saura, *Goya en Burdeos. Guión original de la película dirigida por Carlos Saura* (Barcelona: Galaxia Gutenberg; Circulo de Lectores, 2002), 8.

presented unsuccessfully to the Junta Magna for Goya's centenary in Zaragoza, and a libretto in English entitled *La duquesa de Alba y Goya* (1937) which was also rejected.[143]

This indebtedness to Buñuel, Spain's most famous surrealist filmmaker, is mirrored in *Goya in Bordeaux* (1999) in the primacy of memory and reminiscences. The film is structured according to the principle of flashback narration. The old Goya (played by Francisco Rabal), now in exile in Bordeaux, remembers his life and art in a series of flashbacks in which his younger self (played by José Coronado), at the court in Madrid, often appears on the screen simultaneously with the old Goya. As most of the action thus takes place in Goya's mind, past and present merge into each other almost imperceptibly. This fluid sense of time is also achieved through the frequency of fade-ins and superimpositions in the transitions between the past and present. Past and present, and time and space are thus functions of Goya's reveries and memories rather than real entities. Moreover, the film abounds in close-ups of Goya's head and face, producing in the viewer the impression that there is nothing outside of Goya's mind. Likewise, the frequent use of the tracking shot[144] and the moving camera which follows Goya, alternating with scenes in which the camera seems to

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[143] Cf. Saura and Francisco Rabal, the actor who plays the old Goya, in an interview with Guzmán Urrero Peña, "Por un retrato de Luis Buñuel: Entrevista con Francisco Rabal y Carlos Saura," in *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos* 603 (2000): 33-35. Saura also points to this homage when he remarks in the prologue to his screenplay that Rabal interprets "un Goya que tanto me recuerda a Luis Buñuel y a mi hermano Antonio por su fuerza, su tesón y su curiosidad por las cosas" (15; "a Goya that very much reminds me of Luis Buñuel and of my brother Antonio for his strength, his determination, and his curiosity for things," my transl.).

[144] A tracking shot is when the camera moves physically into the scene, so that the spatial relationships among objects shift, as does our perspective. James Monaco, *How to Read a Film: Movies, Media, Multimedia* (Oxford and New York: Oxford UP, 2000) 201.

adopt Goya's perspective, puts the viewer into Goya's position, forcing him or her almost to merge with the protagonist.

The flashbacks, although not completely chronological, trace Goya's development as an increasingly politically conscious painter, culminating in his *Desastres de la guerra* (which were actually created prior to the *Pinturas negras*, but the creation of which precedes them in this film). This process is paralleled by an increasing autonomy of Goya's work. While many paintings are shown and briefly commented on throughout the film (including the *Caprichos*), only the two series of the *Pinturas negras* and the *Desastres* are animated and come alive. The animation of the *Pinturas negras* takes place within Goya's imagination, and it is in this scene that the dramatization of the *Sueño de la razón* occurs. The *Desastres de la guerra*, by contrast, are transformed back into life, becoming real-life events that are recognizable as inspirations for etchings such as *Aun podrán servir, También esos*, *Populacho*, *Lo merecía*, ¡*Grande hazaña! !Con muertos*!, and *Al cementerio*. The filmic representation of these two series, then, parallels the circumstances of production: while the *Pinturas negras* are figments of the artist's imagination, the *Desastres* claim to be historical eye-witness accounts of the War of Independence.[145] Saura's filmic ekphrasis of these paintings thus achieves a parallel to Goya's original works.

It is during the animation of the *Pinturas negras* that the dramatization of the *Sueño de la razón* takes place. Thus, as in Buero's drama, the *Capricho* 43 and the *Pinturas negras* are closely connected. And similar to Kunert's poem and

[145] Of course, as Hughes has pointed out, "not everything, or even not much that is depicted in [the *Desastres*] happened in front of Goya's eyes. He was the artist who invented a kind of illusion in the service of truth: the illusion of being there when dreadful things happen" (272).

Buero's drama, Saura's *Goya in Bordeaux* dramatizes *El sueño de la razón* as internal, mental threat that is mirrored by a scene of social oppression. At the beginning of this scene, Goya is working on the *Romería a San Isidro* (*The Pilgrimage of San Isidro*). Suddenly, he starts hearing noises and seems to have a mental attack. When he sits down in the posture of the *Sueño de la razón*, his face buried in his arms, his paintings (the *Pinturas negras*) come alive and haunt him, starting the dramatic ekphrasis of the *Sueño de la razón*. In the second part of this sequence, Cayetana, the Duchess of Alba and Goya's supposed lover, suddenly stands in the middle of the room. As she recedes, the room fills with people in a social gathering. Unexpectedly, however, the ceiling, a blue cloth, threatens to smother them. The scene ends abruptly with a jump cut to the old Goya's present in Bordeaux, drawing concentric circles into his notebook. I will discuss aspects of both the montage and the mise-en-scène of this ekphrastic sequence in order to show how Saura's film translates Goya's aquatint into filmic language. Analyzing the types of cuts (montage) as well as the camera distance, angle and movement (mise-en-scène), and the use of music, I show how Saura achieves a transmedialization of this image similar to the one of the poem and the drama through filmic means.

In this sequence, the types of cuts that predominate are jump cuts and superimpositions, both of which contribute to the impression of the scene as a drama originating in Goya's mind.[146] While the close-up predominates in this scene, heightening the claustrophobic atmosphere, a long shot is used at one

[146] Camera distance refers to the use of close-ups, full, three-quarters, medium, or long shots (Monaco 197).

point, allowing the viewer a glimpse of the whole nightmare. Throughout much of the first part of this scene, the camera is at an overhead or high angle position, which, in addition to the circling movement of the camera above Goya's head produces a dizzying atmosphere and a loss of orientation in the viewer. Likewise, when at eye-level angle, the camera often zooms into the objects focused on (that is, either Goya or his paintings), thus again not allowing for any spatial orientation. Finally, the whole sequence contains allusions to two of the film's musical leitmotifs, Luigi Boccherini's "Fandango" and a piece by an anonymous Spanish singer of the sixteenth century, "No hay que decirle el primor."

After the visual construction of Goya's mental attack, when he sits down in the position reminiscent of the *Sueño de la razón*, the camera zooms in on Goya burying his face in his arms, thereby signaling that the following action originates in his mind and represents his point of view. Behind him the painting of *Asmodea* (*Asmodeus*, 1820-24) can be seen. Goya looks up, suspiciously glancing into the camera and at the viewer, when the scene jump cuts to a full-screen view of that painting. Thus implying that Goya is staring at the painting which we just saw behind him, the jump-cuts here produce a spatial confusion and indeterminacy for the viewer that mirrors that of Goya in this scene, as well as the use of space in Goya's *Caprichos*.[147] Immediately upon seeing the full-screen view of *Asmodea*, a shot is heard, after which Boccherini's *Fandango* briefly

[147] López-Rey has emphasized that the "contrast between clear delineation of figures and indefinite often shapeless nature of background endows the *Caprichos* plates with a sense of unreality" (98). Their "shadowed background with only faint delineations of landscape or indoor spaces" and the lack of clear indications of distance and depth often produce spatial indeterminacy. In the few instances when there is an indication of a remote distance, this only "serves to enhance the abnormal proportions of the foreground" (ibid.).

plays, and the two figures in the painting disappear as if shot by the two men in the lower right-hand corner of the painting.

Boccherini's *Fandango* is marked as a leitmotif associated with Goya's mind from the very beginning of the film. After the opening credits, presented over a dead bull reminiscent of a Rembrandt painting as Saura claimed elsewhere,[148]

> [s]e escucha el Fandango del Quinteto en re mayor opus 37 de Boccherini, que a veces tarareaba Goya con escasa afinación debido a su sordera. De esta música y de las vísceras del buey, carne, grasa, sebo, sangre coagulada, va surgiendo el rostro de un hombre anciano que se mueve inquieto entre las sabanas de lino de la cama estilo imperio (Saura, *Goya* 20).[149]

Saura thus states explicitly that Goya's features emerge not only from the visual aspects but also from the music. Throughout the film, the music occurs mostly during the artist's flashbacks, marking or perhaps evoking his reminiscences and his memory. The brief motif heard in this scene is a Minuet, a joyful dance hardly fitting to accompany the *Pinturas negras* or the *Sueño de la razón*. Thus rather than illustrating or enhancing the themes of the paintings, Boccherini's music here emphasizes that the scene derives from Goya's imagination, but that it has reality status like his other flashbacks, that to him, it

[148]In the above-cited interview, Saura stresses that the credits sequence does not refer so much to Buñuel as to a "beautiful painting" by Rembrandt, *The Bull*. This quote is deliberate, since Goya said (and does so twice, with a slight variation, in this film) that his great masters were Velázquez, Rembrandt, and nature (Urrero Peña 34).

[149] "The Fandango of the Quintet in D major opus 37 by Boccherini is heard, which Goya sometimes hummed with little refinement due to his deafness. From this music and from the entrails of the bull, flesh, fat, sebum, coagulated blood, gradually the face of an old man emerges who moves restlessly between the linen sheets of the imperial-style bed" (my transl.).

really happened. Boccherini's music thus renders the scene plausible for the viewer.

As the minuet motif comes to an end, in the background of *Asmodea* now the *Duelo a garrotazos* (*Duel with clubs*; 1820-24) appears. After a jump-cut to Goya and back to the painting, the landscape changes again and the giant from *Coloso/El gigante (The Colossus/The Giant*, 1810-12) emerges from the dark clouds in the sky as the camera slowly moves up from the bottom to the top of the painting, as if following Goya's eyes. After another jump cut to a close-up of Goya's bewildered face, the camera slowly zooms in on *Saturno devorando a su hijo* (*Saturn Devouring His Son*, 1820-24). Again, the camera jump-cuts to Goya, with a scared, incredulous look on his face, and back to *Saturn*, focusing now on the blood streaming down the limbs of the devoured son. When the camera cuts back to Goya once more, he buries his face in his arms again, reminding the viewer of the *Sueño de la razón*, the dramatization of which is about to begin.

In this prelude to the dramatization proper of *Capricho* 43, jump-cuts and close-ups predominate. Five times the camera switches between a close-up of Goya's face and the various paintings. These frequent jump-cuts underscore the relationship between Goya and the animations in his pictures, pointing to their origin in Goya's hallucination. Likewise, the close-ups of Goya's face emphasize the centrality of his perspective and vision, while the lack of any wide angle shots enhances the claustrophobic atmosphere and the spatial disorientation. Similarly, the camera angle often invites the viewer to adopt Goya's point of view, putting the viewer into the same spot as the artist.

In the following part of this sequence, the characters from the *Romería a San Isidro* step out of the painting and approach Goya. When he looks up again, the camera slowly zooms in on Goya's face until only his right eye, part of his right cheek and part of his forehead are seen. As the camera zooms in, Goya's face is superimposed by the advancing characters from his painting, headed by the open-mouthed man he was working on at the beginning of the sequence. These characters, who are still painted figures rather than human beings, advance toward the camera which now remains stable and adopts Goya's standpoint. The viewer is thus put into the same immobilized position as the protagonist, unable to flee from the formidable creatures. After a quick jump cut back to Goya, the camera continues to focus on the forward-moving characters until the open-mouthed man appears to be at arm's length. When he seems to be moving out of the camera and into the viewer's living room, the camera jump-cuts to show Goya from above, surrounded by the creatures of his imagination, thus changing both the perspective and the camera angle. After circling around Goya's head a few times, the camera zooms out, along the full length of the table he is sitting at. But from this panoramic view, the camera switches unexpectedly again back to a series of close-ups of these painted faces which seem to be circling around Goya, thus again adopting the artist's own perspective. But once more, the camera cuts to a high angle view, circling around Goya's head, until the characters' faces are superimposed on his head. After more circular movements of their faces at eye-level from Goya's perspective, the artist's face blends in and for a while, the

moving characters are superimposed over Goya, until this scene ends with an extreme close-up of his face.[150]

Unlike in the first part of this scene, then, Saura uses here superimpositions, high and wide angle perspective and a moving camera. On the whole, the camera alternates between Goya's point of view and a third person perspective, thus providing an external description as well as the internal personal experience of the artist in the *Sueño de la razón*. Yet, the external third-person perspective is clearly outweighed by the subjective first-person point of view. Moreover, even when the camera adopts the high angle (third-person) position, its circling motion mirrors the dizziness and vertigo Goya is experiencing. Likewise, the wide angle long shot is abruptly interrupted by Goya's first person point of view of the close-up faces moving before his eyes. The camera thus does not allow the viewer to settle on the third-person view at any time, but continually forces him or her to adopt Goya's perspective and perception. As in Buero's drama, then, the viewer is drawn into the dramatization of the *Sueño de la razón*, and identifies with the dreaming artist. The superimpositions further contribute to this notion of participating in a dream sequence, as they make the viewer experience the blurred, distorted vision of a dreamer. Likewise, although the use of the moving camera as opposed to the movement of the figures in front of the

[150] In Saura's screenplay, this whole scene is described very briefly, yet with an emphasis on the origin of this scene in the painter's own mind: "El pintor es acosado por los seres imaginarios que pueblan su mente y que salen de sus pinturas como si adquirieran vida. Hombres y mujeres amenazadores le van rodeando. Rostros que parecen mascaras, con el rictus de bocas que gritan y cantan. Redobles de tambores resuenan en su cabeza y un pitido horrible le tortura." (86-88). ("The painter is accosted by imaginary beings that populate his mind and that come out of his paintings as if they acquired life. Menacing men and women slowly surround him. Faces that seem masks, with grinning mouths that scream and sing. Drums echo in his head and a horrible shrill whistle tortures him," my transl.)

camera represents two different perspectives, an omniscient third-person and Goya's first person view, in both cases it points to Goya's vertigo through the rapid, dizzying motion.

The second scene in this sequence begins when, immediately after the figures have disappeared, the Duchess of Alba suddenly stands in the middle of the (or another?) room, slowly receding as another of the film's leitmotifs is playing, "No hay que decirle el primor," a popular song by an anonymous singer of the sixteenth century. Sung by a female voice, this song is associated in the film with the Duchess, and occurs during various other flashbacks. Meanwhile, the room fills with people among them "sobre todo clérigos" (*Goya* 88; "above all clerics"), apparently gathering for a social occasion, when suddenly the ceiling transforms into "un cielo de nubes que desciende lentamente sobre las personas de la sala" (ibid; "a sky of clouds that slowly descends over the people in the room"). They are hardly able to free themselves, and the sky keeps crushing down onto them. Their struggle is ended abruptly when the scene jump cuts to a flash-forward to the present tense of Goya sitting in the *chocolatería* of Braulio Poc in Bordeaux, drawing concentric circles into a notebook.[151]

The dramatization of the *Sleep of Reason*, then, reflects the threat and fears epitomized in the *Black Paintings* and oppressing Spanish society during the regime of Fernando VII. Yet, this whole surrealist nightmare occurs in a flashback that ends with the old Goya drawing, thus alluding to the caption of *Capricho* 43, of the possibility of overcoming the demonic with art by joining fantasy and

[151] In Saura's screenplay the whole sequence (85-88), as the rest of the screenplay, has no directions for camera techniques, and it thus leaves out the jump cuts to Goya's face in between the various animations of his paintings.

reason. However, this positive note is not present in the screenplay, which ends more pessimistically by emphasizing that the clerics' efforts to free themselves are "inútil, porque el cielo va bajando más y más, aplastando y enguyendo [sic.] a todos los que allí se encuentran" (Saura, *Goya* 88; "useless, because the sky sinks more and more, plastering and swallowing up all who are there," my transl.). Moreover, the next chapter does not begin with Goya drawing. It is more than a page later and thus unconnected to the dramatization of the *Sueño de la razón* that Goya in the screenplay "dibuja una espiral…" (90; "draws a spiral," my transl.).

The dramatization of *Capricho* 43 in Saura's script thus ends rather ironically with the attempt of the clerics to free themselves from the burden of heaven. This image of the sky, or heaven, falling upon and crushing these members of the church emphasizes a social criticism that is also present in the actual film, but is there given a less apocalyptic ending. In the screenplay, Saura emphasizes the parallel between Goya's dream of reason, his nightmare, and the cleric's nightmare of the sky crushing them, thereby perhaps indirectly hinting at Goya's threat by the Inquisition (which is otherwise not thematized in the film or screenplay).

## CONCLUSION

Throughout the dramatic ekphrasis of the *Sueño de la razón*, the artist is portrayed as helpless victim of the figures from his art that attack him. But the ending of the flashback which shows Goya drawing a spiral depicts him in control of himself and his art. As in Buero Vallejo's drama, then, the film uses the

dramatization of the *Sueño de la razón* as a learning experience for the artist himself, a process of overcoming the demons that oppress him. In both the drama and the film, the full caption of the painting *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters* thus applies to Goya himself as well as to his country. Likewise, both Buero's drama and Saura's film emphasize the reality status of Goya's dream sequence through similar techniques of viewer identification. For example, both use the so-called "immersion effects" that I have referred to above, by reproducing only the sounds and noises of Goya's mind and imagination while eliminating all real external sounds and voices.

Moreover, both the drama and the film alternate between first and third person perspective in their respective ekphrastic scenes. Saura's film does so especially through the camera techniques of changing the angle and the camera distance, while Buero's drama achieves this through the visual and verbal quotations from the *Pinturas negras* and the *Desastres*: On the one hand, the audience hears only the sounds and voices in Goya's mind, many of which are quotes from the *Desastres* (nothing of what the Royal Volunteers say is actually heard by the audience!), thus experiencing the whole scene from Goya's perspective. On the other hand, the viewer is able to adopt a more distanced third-person viewpoint through those very quotations, both the visual ones of the *Pinturas negras* and the verbal ones of the *Desastres*, as they function as indicators of Goya's disharmony with himself and his work and thus allow the audience to observe the artist's process of enlightenment and self-knowledge.

Likewise, in Kunert's poem, the reader is both invited to adopt the speaker's perspective, but also a more distanced one towards the speaker at the end. Through the use of deictic adverbs such as "da" and the descriptive parallel structure of the beginning verses of most stanzas (e.g. "On the streets," "In the corners"), the reader takes on the same detached, observing perspective. But this parallel structure also emphasizes the continuity between Goya's capricho and the ensuing capricho-like images of the poet's mind. Moreover, when the poem ends with the speaker identifying with Goya's aquatint and putting himself in the position of the awakening artist, the use of the ambiguous "Feder" and the disjuncture between the lighthearted tone of this stanza and the rest of the poem allows the reader a higher-level position from which he in turn can observe the speaker's blind spot, that is, his dream of superiority over the painter and the demons oppressing him and society. Although the reader has a greater degree of distance toward the speaker in Kunert's poem than the viewer has toward the protagonist in Buero's drama and Saura's film, all three texts play with the point of view in similar ways, inviting both identification with and distance toward their subjects.

I have discussed these three examples of dramatic ekphrasis to show how a film can dramatize a visual image in similar ways as do literary texts. The montage starts in all three examples with a glance of the image itself (a description in the poem, a mise-en-scène tableau vivant in the drama and the film), and then continues the painter's "sueño" with a dream of the speaking subject or the dramatic or filmic protagonist. The structure of the ekphrastic

sequence is thus very similar in these three media, all of which begin with a scene of internal, private nightmare mirrored by a scene that implies an external, socio-political torment. Likewise, all three refer to the painter's own verbal "ekphrasis" in the captions to the preparatory drawings and the final image, as well as to subsequent art historical interpretations. And finally, in all three cases, it is implied that the artist, either the writer-speaker or the painter-protagonist, needs to awaken from his own "sleep of reason": In Kunert's poem, the speaker, from his dream of his power and superiority over the painter, in Buero's drama, Goya from his political blindness and his lack of self-knowledge, and in Saura's film, Goya awakes from the sleep of his reason when his own paintings make him aware of his suppressed fears and provoke his social commitment in the subsequent flashbacks that animate his *Desastres de la guerra*.[152]

"The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters" thus has a personal as well as political meaning in the poem, the drama and the film. But while in Kunert's poem and Buero's drama the public and social aspect of the interpretation dominate, in Saura's film the personal, private nightmare is the main focus. Similarly, whereas the texts of Kunert and Buero interpret the *Sueño de la razón* as skeptical or ambivalent towards enlightenment through reason (in unison with current art historical interpretations of that aquatint), Saura's film portrays a more optimistic and affirmative attitude when the drawing of the spiral symbolically

[152] Hence, perhaps, the reversal of chronology in the film with regard to the *Pinturas negras* and the *Desastres*, which in the film function as culmination of Goya's artistic career although in reality they preceded the *Pinturas negras*. Likewise, the scene in which Goya comments on his *Caprichos* underscores their intimate, personal function for the artist, rather than their sarcasm and social satire, an interpretation which highlights all the more the need for a political awakening of the artist during the dramatic ekphrasis of the *Sueño de la razón*.

ends the nightmare sequence. However, the skeptical, ambivalent interpretation of the poem and the drama possibly has its roots, as I have indicated in each case, in the respective political climate (GDR, Francoism) out of which the works grew, whereas Saura's film was made in an era of relative artistic freedom.

Finally, all three texts allude to the self-reflexive aspect of Goya's aquatint, that is, its reference to the painter's tools. But whereas Kunert's poem uses this reference to reaffirm the writer's power over that of the painter while simultaneously undermining that very power, Buero and Saura are more positive. Buero's dramatization of the *Sueño de la razón* is self-referential in that the sequence functions like a meta-drama, a drama within the drama acted out within the protagonist's mind, and a drama about drama, demonstrating the power of this dramatization to end Goya's own sleep of reason. Like Kunert's poem, Saura's filmic transformation of Goya's aquatint ends with an explicit reference to the painter's tools and the activity of drawing, but it also includes a self-referential gesture to the "hybrid nature of the cinematic medium"[153] and its ability to translate the flat, silent, and static work of art into an embodied, speaking, and moving picture.

More than poetry and drama, by animating and dramatizing the image, film embodies it, giving it a shape as well as temporality, and transforming the painting's two-dimensionality into the three-dimensional. Moreover, the moving camera can function as a self-referential device, since it stresses the existence of the relationship between camera and subject or object, and calls attention to the

[153] Brigitte Peucker, "Filmic Tableau Vivant: Vermeer, Intermediality, and the Real," *Rites of Realism: Essays on Corporeal Cinema,* ed. Ivone Margulies (Durham, NC and London: Duke UP, 2003), 294-314, here 195.

filmmaker (Monaco 201-203). Making the viewer aware of the presence of the camera, in Saura's film this device points to the filmic techniques of transforming Goya's pictorial signs into cinematic language. Furthermore, the ekphrasis in both the drama and the film is primarily visual rather than verbal, but enhanced and reinforced by auditory means such as sounds, noises and music. Although drama and film are visual, verbal and auditory in nature, the transposition of Goya's *Sleep of Reason* is in both Buero's drama and Saura's film completely non-verbal (unless one reads the drama or screenplay, of course), showing that visual and auditory means can replace verbal ekphrasis.

# Chapter 4:
# Goya's *El sueño de la razón* in Lion Feuchtwanger's Novel and Konrad Wolf's Film Adaptation: Private or Social Demons?

## INTRODUCTION

Lion Feuchtwanger's novel *Goya oder der arge Weg der Erkenntnis*,[154] written between 1948 and 1950 from his exile in America and published in 1951, was adapted to film in 1971 by East German director Konrad Wolf. Wolf's *Goya*, then, is a film about a novel about a painter and his art works. In other words, it is a film adaptation of two other art forms, and its ekphrases translate both Feuchtwanger's novel and Goya's paintings to screen. However, rather than directly adapting Feuchtwanger's ekphrases and thus producing second-degree ekphrases, the film generally constructs its own cinematic ekphrases or alters those found in the novel. Thus, although both the novel and the film have three ekphrases of Goya's *El sueño de la razón produce monstruos*, they occur at different moments in the film and the novel, and moreover are different types of ekphrasis. While in the novel, interpretive ekphrases predominate, the film mostly animates the etching in dramatic ekphrases. This change of ekphrastic type correlates with a change in the point of view of the ekphrasis, and different interpretations of the aquatint.

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[154] The novel was translated into English as *This is the Hour,* trans. by H.T. Lowe-Porter and Frances Fawcett (New York: Viking Press, 1951). This title takes up the stirring caption of the final plate of Goya's *Caprichos*, *Ya es hora*, and has, in Lothar Khan's opinion, contributed to the misunderstanding of the novel in the English-speaking world (cf. Lothar Khan, "Der arge Weg der Erkenntnis," *Lion Feuchtwanger: The Man, his Ideas, his Work: A Collection of Critical Essays,* ed. John M. Spalik (Los Angeles: Hennessey and Infalls, 1972) 201. (The literal translation of the original German title would be *Goya or The Dire Way to Knowledge/Enlightenment.*)

In this chapter, I analyze the different types of ekphrasis in the novel and the film and how they are connected to different functions and resultant interpretations of Goya's aquatint. In comparing the point of view and the montage of these different types of ekphrases in the two media, I will examine whether the changes of the film adaptation are related to medium-specific needs and conventions or whether they are rooted in the desire to make a different statement about Goya's *Sueño de la razón*. Does Goya's aquatint fulfill different functions in the novel and the film or does its role remain the same in spite of different interpretations of it? And how does this difference relate to the overall changes the film makes to the novel and what does it say about the different ideological positions of the writer and the filmmaker?[155]

Written in the form of both a historical novel and a Bildungsroman, Feuchtwanger's *Goya* was conceived as a popular novel that would appeal to the general public as well as convey a political message.[156] While the historical novel was very popular, it was also a useful tool for presenting social criticism in a veiled, distanced form. Thus, as a few scholars have indicated, the novel reveals parallels between Goya's supervision by the inquisition and Feuchtwanger's own

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[155] To my knowledge, no study so far has specifically compared the novel and the film adaptation and very few critics have looked at Wolf's film at all. Part of the reason may be that it is very difficult to access, and only available in DEFA studios. With regard to the novel, it is surprising that no critic has specifically examined the use of ekphrasis in this novel. Most studies focus on Goya's development and on the artist's biography, and only mention his art works in passing as they relate to that biography and development.

[156] Cf. Jost Hermand, "The Case of the Well-Crafted Novel: Lion Feuchtwanger's 'Goya'," *High and Low Cultures: German Attempts at Mediation*, eds. R. Grimm, and J. Hermand (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1994) 76.

anger at his constant surveillance by the FBI in America.[157] On the other hand, Feuchtwanger's absence from the GDR allowed him greater distance from the Marxist socialist party dictates in postwar East Germany. Thus, for example, Goya is not presented as a typical positive hero of social realist novels, but is a flawed and self-contradictory character. Likewise, the cruelty of the inquisition is not countered by representatives of the good, innocent proletariat as a Marxist perspective would prefer (cf. Fischer 202).

*Goya,* Konrad Wolf's film adaptation of Feuchtwanger's novel, was a German-Soviet co-production and was hailed in contemporary East German reviews as film with special relevance to socialist countries due to its spiritual and aesthetic qualities and its abilities to unite artistic value and mass appeal:

> Der "Goya"-Film nimmt in der Filmproduktion der DDR wie der sozialistischen Länder einen besonderen Platz ein, nicht nur wegen seiner geistigen und ästhetischen Qualitäten, sondern aus zwei weiteren Gründen. Er zielt darauf, dem Auseinanderklaffen von Kunstwert und Massenwirkung, das unsere Produktion und unser Programm belastet, entgegenzuwirken durch einen Stoff, der den so oft mit Flachheit und Buntheit erkauften Schauwert in den Dienst eines philosophischen und ästhetischen Anspruchs stellt.[158]

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[157] Cf. Hermand 91, and Ludwig Maximilian Fischer, *Vernunft und Fortschritt: Geschichte und Fiktionalität im historischen Roman Lion Feuchtwangers* (Königstein: Forum Academicum in d. Verlagsgruppe Athenäum, 1979) 160

[158] Peter Ahrens, "Goya," *Die Weltbühne*, Berlin/DDR, 28 Sept. 1971. "The Film Goya has a special place in the film production of the GRD as well as of the socialis countries, not only because of its intellectual and aesthetic qualities, but for two further reasons. It aims to counter the division between artistic value and mass entertainment which burdens our production and our programs, and it does so with the help of a thematics that places the visual, which is so often flat or tawdry, in the service of a philosophical and aeshtetic goal" (my transl.).

> Feuchtwanger beschwor mit seinem Roman eine humanistische Tradition, um am Beispiel eines Kampfes gegen die historische Reaktion den Widerstand gegen die zeitgenössische zu unterstützen.[159]

On the other hand, however, later critics have also seen the film as a "response to attacks made on certain artists and film makers in the course of the Eleventh Plenum of the Central Committee of SED in 1965 and later 1960s."[160] In other words, the film, though produced under the contraints of a socialist context, was nevertheless able to take up the strategies of Feuchtwanger's historical novel by using the historical content to present oblique criticism of his own times.

In spite of the historical nature of the novel and the film, both take considerable liberties with dates and chronology. In fact, the time frame of the novel is a brief five-year span (1795-1800), into which earlier and later events are inserted to corroborate the novel's interpretation of Goya's career. Thus, Feuchtwanger posits the *Caprichos* as Goya's height of artistic maturity and links them to the peace treaty with Amiens even though they are actually three years apart. Likewise, the condemnation of Pablo Olavides by the inquisition and the liberation of the enlightenment writer Jovellanos from exile each depart in the novel about fifteen years from their historical dates, but "dank dieser 'illusionsfördernden Lüge' können sie nun die Politisierung Goyas motivieren."[161]

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[159] Rolf Richter, "Goya – der Weg zur Erkenntnis," *Sonntag*, Berlin/DDR, Nr. 40, 1971. "Feuchtwanger entered with his novel a humanistic tradition, using the resistance against a historical reaction in order to support the resistance against the contemporary one" (my transl.)

[160] Wolfgang Gersch, quoted in Sean Allan, "'Die Kunst braucht kein Feigenblatt'. Art and the Artist in Konrad Wolf's *Goya* and *Der nackte Mann auf dem Sportplatz*," *Finding a Voice: Problems of Language in East German Society and Culture*, eds. Graham Jackmann and Ian F. Roe (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000) 171.

[161] Feuchtwanger, qtd. in Reinhold Jaretzky, "Der Künstler als Held: Zu Lion Feuchtwangers *Goya oder Der arge Weg der Erkenntnis*," *Lion Feuchtwanger: Materialien zu Leben und Werk*, ed. Wilhelm von Sternburg (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1989) 239. ["thanks to this 'productive lie', they

## USES OF EKPHRASIS IN THE NOVEL AND THE FILM

Feuchtwanger's novel is rich in ekphrases, and many paintings are described and discussed form various different perspectives. Returning to the same paintings several times when describing the thoughts and responses of different people, Feuchtwanger's narrator underscores both Goya's artistic intentions and the effect of his art on different individuals. Most of these ekphrases are descriptive and interpretive, giving many details about the paintings as well as a personal reaction or interpretation from one of the characters' points of view or an evaluation by the omniscient narrator. Often, the repeated ekphrases of the same paintings emphasize the gap between personal and artistic intentions and public reception. Wolf's film, on the other hand, in adapting Feuchtwanger's over 570-page novel to the screen, had to reduce the number of the paintings as well as the perspectives from which they are discussed. Specifically, the film reduces Goya's own commentaries and thoughts about his works, focusing instead on their public reception. Moreover, the film foregoes the descriptive ekphrases and either reproduces and interprets images in dramatic ekphrases or shows actual images with interpretive commentary by one of the characters.

Most of the novel's ekphrases by individual characters are represented through free indirect discourse, that is, not through their (direct or indirect) speech, but through their thoughts and pre-verbal feelings reported by the omniscient narrator. In free indirect discourse, the co-presence of the voice of the narrator and that of the character or his/her pre-verbal feelings not only produces

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[i.e. the condemnation of Olavides and the liberation of Jovellanos] can now motivate the politicization of Goya," my transl.]

"polyvocality" and ambiguity of the text "by bringing into play a plurality of speakers and attitudes" but also "dramatizes the problematic relationship between any utterance and its origin."[162] The effect of this technique is another ambiguity: "on the one hand the presence of a narrator may create an ironic distancing. On the other, the tinting of the narrator's speech with character's language may promote empathetic identification on the part of reader" (Rimmon-Kenan 115). Thus, the reader may be left unable to choose between irony and empathy towards the character, an effect which Feuchtwanger's narrator often exploits by allowing the reader access to Goya's innermost thoughts while at the same time evoking ironic distance toward him. Moreover, when used for ekphrasis, free indirect discourse produces yet another ambiguity between the voices. Ekphrasis in free in direct discourse may be constituted by the character's pre-verbal thought and feelings, thus resulting in a verbalized (by the narrator) yet pre- or non-verbal ekphrasis (of the character).

For example, when Goya muses about Velazquez' *Las meninas* and plans his own portrait of the king's family (*La familia de Carlos IV*), his thoughts are narrated through the third person voice of the narrator, but clearly in Goya's perspective:

> Nein, er wird keine vertrackte Anekdote malen wie van Loo, und niemand wird sagen dürfen, was dem Velazquez erlaubt sei, sei dem Goya nicht erlaubt. [...] Und in der Dunkelheit, mit innerm Jubel, sah er deutlich, was er malen wollte, die wiederstrebenden Farben, die er zwingen wird, eins zu sein, den ganzen schillernden, glitzernden Einklang, und inmitten des

[162] Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (London and New York: Routledge, 1983) 111-113. On the production of ambiguity through the confusion between the voices of the narrator and characters in free indirect discourse see also Gerard Genette, *Narrative Discourse Revisited* (Ithaka, NY: Cornell UP, 1988) 52-55.

phantastischen Gefunkels hart, nackt, und klar die Gesichter (*Goya* 282).[163]

In the ekphrases in the novel, Goya's perspective predominates as he is constantly reflecting on or discussing his works. Appropriately for a novel that deals with "Erkenntnis" (knowledge, enlightenment) as the German subtitle indicates, Feuchtwanger's *Goya* focuses on the artist's though processes, using his art and his own ekphrases about it as tools for reaching personal, political and artistic responsibility and maturity. This process of growth is further enhanced and given additional dimensions by the omniscient narrator's ekphrases from his third-person perspective. His depictive and interpretive ekphrases not only present Goya's works to the reader in highly visual form (achieving high degrees of *enargeia*), but moreover, they provide the reader with important reflections about the works' significance for Goya's development from a more objective and authoritative standpoint. For example, the last part of the fourth chapter deals with Goya's *Romería a San Isidro* (*Pilgrimage to San Isidro*) from the perspective of the narrator. As all chapters, this one too ends with verses in trochees, a device I will further discuss in the conclusion of this chapter. Here, the trochees are unusually long, beginning with an extensive, highly visual and personal description (e.g. "Die geliebte Stadt," "the beloved city"), but ending with an evaluating commentary:

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[163] "No, he wasn't going to paint any meaningless episodes like Van Loo, and no one should say that what was all right for Velazquez was not all right for Goya. […] And in the darkness, with inward exultation, he saw exactly what he wanted to paint, the conflicting colours that he would force to harmonize with each other, the whole shimmering glittering unison, and, in the midst of all this sparkling extravaganza, nakedly clear, the faces" (*This Is* 252).

…Er [i.e. Goya] hatte
Abgeschüttelt jene strenge Lehre von der Linie, die so
Lange ihn beengt, er war jetzt
Frei, er war jetzt glücklich, und in
Seiner Romeria wurde
Alles Licht und Farbe.
Vorn das Volk, der Fluß, die weiße,
Breite Stadt Madrid dahinter
Wurden eines; Luft und Stadt und
Menschen woben ineinander
Farbig, locker, leicht und hell und
Glücklich (*Goya* 163).[164]

In these verses, the narrator emphasizes Goya's achievement, initiated in this novel with the portrait of Doña Lucia Bermúdez, of letting go of the neo-classicist focus on the line, and instead focusing on color. A non-commissioned work created only because of the artist's desire to paint it and to take up the creative challenge it poses, the *Romería* in this novel is a result of Goya's personal joy (due to his initially happy love affair with the Duchess Cayetana de Alba), transferred to artistic success. This ekphrasis, then, underscores the personal origin and meaning of Goya's artistic achievement as well as its larger significance for his aesthetics. Ekphrasis is thus a fundamental means of conveying the novel's main theme.

The use of ekphrasis in Wolf's film, by contrast, points to the way in which the film shifts the novel's focus on personal artistic growth in conjunction with socio-political awareness to one on Goya's social commitment in the public

[164] This part has been cut in the English version. My own literal, un-poetic translation of this passage follows: "He had / Abandoned that strict doctrine of the line, that had / Constricted him for so long, he was now / Free, was happy, and in / his Pilgrimage everything / Became light and color. / In the foreground the people, the river, the white / Wide city Madrid behind / All became one; air and city and / People merged into each other / Colorful, weightless, light and / Happy."

sphere. Unlike the novel, the interpretive ekphrases are all in direct speech. Foregoing all internal aesthetic reflections of the protagonist, the film limits its interpretive ekphrases to comments by other people, such as Goya's aide Agustin Esteve, his Enlightenment friends Jovellanos, Moratín and Quintana, King Carlos and Queen Maria Luisa, and the Inquisitor, Reynoso. A striking example is found in the film when Agustin Esteve articulates the innovative artistic significance of Goya's pictorial expression in his portrait of Doña Lucía Bermúdez; phrases which in the novel represent Goya's own reflections on that painting in response to the reaction of his friend don Miguel.[165] Moreover, in the film Goya falls asleep over Esteve's exultant verbalization of Goya's achievement: "Die klaren Linien der alten Meister sind gut. Und klare Dinge lassen sich damit klar wiedergeben. Aber die Menschen sind nicht klar. Das Bösartige, das Gefährliche, das Hexenhafte, das lässt sich mit den alten Mitteln nicht sagen" ("The pure lines of the old masters are good. And pure things can be represented by pure lines. But mankind is not pure. The bad, the dangerous, the witchlike cannot be expressed by the old means," my transl.).[166]

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[165] Another example of the film putting Goya's thoughts or words into another character's mouth was mentioned in the introduction: Goya's self-defense with regard to the inoffensive nature of the five paintings he made in response to an Inquisition trial he witnessed is uttered in the film by the Inquisitor, thus further pointing to the more central role of the Inquisition in the film.

[166] In the novel, Goya's reflections are somewhat more extensive as they directly challenge his friend don Miguel's expectations of painting: "Ja mein lieber Miguel, die Methoden deines Monsieur David sind gut; klare Linien sind eine gute Sache, und klare Dinge lassen sich damit klar wiedergeben. Aber Welt und Menschen sind nun einmal nicht klar. Das Bösartige, das Gefährliche, das Kobold- und Hexenhafte, das Dahinter, das läßt sich mit deinen Mitteln nicht malen, das kann man den verehrten Alten nicht abschauen" (*Goya* 41). ["Yes, my dear Miguel. Your David's methods are good. Pure line is a good thing in itself, and pure things allow themselves to be represented by it. But the world and the men in it are not pure. The bad, the dangerous, the supernatural, that which lurks behind, everything that does not let itself be expressed by your means, that's something you can't find in your respected classical masters" (*This Is* 34).]

In presenting Goya as ignorant of and indifferent to his aesthetic achievement, the film implicitly contrasts artistic intention and public reception, foregoing Goya's search for artistic truth and expression. In the novel, by contrast, Goya verbalizes here for the first time the scope and significance of his formal discovery which implies not only a new expression for portraiture, but a whole new world view; one that acknowledges the presence of the demonic in every day life. Moreover, in the novel this portrait continues to haunt the art connoisseur Don Miguel Bermúdez, an adamant advocate of the neo-classical style of French painters such as Jacques Louis David, until he has to admit Goya's truth in spite of himself (*Goya* 204-5). In the film this portrait has no such impact on anyone but Agustin Esteve, whose ekphrasis is thus almost discredited by the lack of further support. The reduced frequency of ekphrases in the film, then, also affects them qualitatively.

However, various paintings are represented in tableaux vivants or longer dramatizations in the film, thereby showing visually what the novel tells verbally. Often, these dramatic ekphrases partly portray Goya's point of view, however, they are generally coupled with interpretive ekphrases that stress the works' public reception and socio-political significance. For example, when Goya paints the royal family in his *Familia de Carlos IV*, the viewer sees the painting as a tableaux vivant as they are posing. After Goya has stared at his sitters for a long time (during which we see partly what he sees, but mostly him looking), the scene jump cuts to Goya's studio, showing in close-up a sketch of Maria Luisa's head, while Goya's literary friend Jovellanos criticizes the majesties for their misuse of

power and their inability to rule Spain. The poet Quintana chimes in this criticism which he sees mirrored in Goya's works; while they discuss the sketches and the monarch's misrule, the camera focuses on several parts of Goya's sketches for the painting. Although Goya expressly denies any political intentions or criticism, stating he sees the majesties "weder mild noch hart sondern so wie sie sind" ("neither mild nor hard, but just as they are"), his friends insist that his sketches show the ruin these monarchs have bought to Spain, their squandering, their military losses, reducing them to mere "gekrönte Vogelscheuchen" ("crowned scarecrows"). The film thus uses ekphrases from other people's point of view in order to show that art can reveal greater truths than the artist himself knows or intends, a notion which the novel conveys through the use of free indirect discourse and the ambiguity between the narrator's and character's voice.

To be sure, the novel also indicates a similar reception by Goya's friends. However, here it is mainly Don Miguel Bermúdez, whose aesthetic views are diametrically opposed to those of Goya, and their discussion, consequently, centers on the means of portrayal rather than its political implications: Bermúdez criticizes Goya's relentless depiction of the ugly and the repulsive ("Häßliches und Widerwärtiges"), his overly simple, primitive composition ("übersimple, primitive Komposition"), which results in caricatures rather than portraits, and he concludes with the aesthetic judgment that "[d]ieses Bild ist mißlungen" (Goya 296; "This painting is not a success," *This Is* 266). It is much later that the poet Quintana voices his political interpretation of this painting, when he describes it to the Duchess of Alba and Doctor Peral. Yet even then, his ekphrasis centers on

the aesthetic qualities of the painting, its "flood of colors" ("Flut der Farben"), the "realism of the heads emerging from it, naked, hard, and ugly" ("Realismus der Köpfe, die nackt, hart und häßlich daraus hervortauchen"), and Goya's "particular device" ("besondere[n] Kunstwert") of showing so few hands in a picture of so many people (*This Is* 289; *Goya* 322).

In short, even when the film does represent Goya's perspective through a tableau vivant or a dramatic ekphrasis, it still does not reflect the novel's emphasis on aesthetic growth. The combination of the tableau vivant from Goya's perspective and the interpretive ekphrases by other characters shifts the focus from inner artistic development to the reception, public effect, and political significance of Goya's art. In the novel, Goya's *Caprichos* function as apex of his artistic as well as social consciousness and "Erkenntnis," and it only briefly alludes to Goya's plans for the *Coloso*, one of his *Pinturas negras*, in the final chapter. By contast, the film ends with dramatic ekphrases of the *Desastres de la guerra*, the paintings about the Napoleonic invasion (*El dos de mayo* and *Los fusilamientos del tres de mayo*) and the *Pinturas negras* in order to further underscore the political development and commitment of Goya's art and his conflict with the Inquisition. In fact, in the film the Inquisitor forces Goya to recant his *Caprichos*, which thus mark a political failure (rather than the height of artistic and political maturity) in contrast to the more socio-politically involved paintings and etchings and the *Pinturas negras* which greet the Inquisitors instead of Goya when they come to search for him.

Entering the *Quinta del Sordo*, on the walls of which Goya painted his *Pinturas negras*, the Inquisitor asks for Goya. After a brief medium shot of the Inquisitor, *Saturn devouring his Son* is shown full screen in an extreme close-up of the devouring mouth, thus associating the Inquisitor with the violent god. The two are further linked by the bright red of the Inquisitor's cloak and the blood streaming down the painted figure's limbs. The camera then moves from the bottom to the top of the painting before jump-cutting back to a close-up of the Inquisitor's face which menacingly approaches the camera as he enters the room, threatening that "nobody can escape divine retribution" ("Der göttlichen Vergeltung kann sich niemand entziehen"), which he takes upon himself to fulfill.

At the very end of the film, the Inquisitor emerges from the *Aquelarre* (*Witches' Sabbath*) as if he was one of the devilish crowd, from which he is at first almost indistinguishable. As he walks toward the camera, with the Aquelarre behind him, he condemns Goya: "Ich verurteile Goya zum ewigen Vergessen. Er sei verflucht" ("I condemn Goya to eternal forgetting. May he be cursed"). Here, he pauses, looking directly into the camera and at the viewer: "Verflucht und vergessen in Ewigkeit" ("cursed and forgotten in Eternity"). The irony of this ending derives not only from the obvious fact that this condemnation to forgetting ends a film about Goya which contributes to his memory and fame, but also from the associative ekphrasis of this ending. Although the Inquisitor presents himself as God's representative on earth, with the power of God's "divine retribution," the mise-en-scène association with the *Aquelarre* indicates that he is not God's but the Devil's envoy.

## *EL SUEÑO DE LA RAZÓN* IN THE NOVEL AND THE FILM

Feuchtwanger's novel has been said to use the metaphor of Goya's *Sueño de la razón,* that is, of sleeping reason as the central message of his historical novel and its social and aesthetic concerns (Fischer 223). While the novel does depict Goya's process of awakening from a "sleep of reason," it does so by focusing on the unification of reason and fantasy to create artistic "maravillas," as the caption to *Capricho* 43 describes. Although the film also portrays an awakening of reason, its focus is Goya's political awakening and the function of art as a means of subverting ideology. Thus, whereas the novel ends with a re-unification of fantasy and reason, with Goya's victory over his ghosts who yet still remain present ("Er hatte die Gespenster gezwungen, ihm zu dienen, aber sie blieben aufrührerisch," 562), and with a new project of art only for himself (the *Pinturas negras*), the film ends with images of war and upheaval and the threat of the Inquisition from which Goya has fled into exile. Here, then, the "sleep of reason" and the demons it brings forth have not yet been overcome.

The *Sueño de la razón* is not only a metaphor for the novel and the film, but is also transmedialized at various times in both, and can thus be interpreted as a mise-en-abyme of the two media. The three ekphrases in Feuchtwanger's novel, two interpretive and one dramatic, depict this image as an expression of Goya's own inner demons and his attempts to dominate them. Thus, all three of these ekphrases are composed in a montage of "sleeping" and "awakening" of reason

that emphasizes the personal, aesthetic function of this image and mirrors its use as metaphor for the whole novel.

The first, interpretive, ekphrasis of Goya's *Capricho* 43 occurs after Goya has learned from his doctor Peral that he will become irreversibly deaf and that the origin of his sickness lies in his brain, probably due to a venereal disease. Although Peral emphasizes that it has not yet affected his brain, Goya concludes that he will not only be deaf but also become mad. In the trochees that end this chapter, the narrator presents Goya's response to learning about this illness in a brief tableau vivant of the *Sueño de la razón*:

> Oh, da
> Sind sie wieder, die Dämonen!
> Heller Tag ist's, und er hat es
> Stets gewußt: die Ungeheuer,
> Die bei Tage kommen, sind die
> Schlimmsten, viel gefährlicher als
> Die der Nacht. Er träumt und ist doch
> Furchtbar wach. Er wirft sich
> Übern Tisch, verzweifelt, um sie
> Nicht zu sehen, doch er sieht sie.
> Sie sind in ihm, sind er selber,
> Sind gleichzeitig in und außer
> Ihm. (*Goya* 355)[167]

The image is evoked through the description and interpretation of the setting which will remind the reader of Goya's aquatint. Especially the lines "Er wirft sich / Übern Tisch, verzweifelt, um sie / Nicht zu sehen" provide a brief tableau vivant of this aquatint, allowing the reader to visualize Goya's position

[167] "Oh, there they / Were again, there were the demons! / Broad daylight it is, and he has /Always known it: known the monsters / Who by day present themselves are / Worst of all, more fearsome than the / Ones by night. He dreams, but yet is / Frightfully awake. He writhes and / Flings himself across the table / Desperately, not to see them, / But he sees them, notwithstanding, / They are in him, are his very / Self, at once inside and outside / Him." (*This Is* 319)

and the attack of the "Dämonen" and "Ungeheuer." But the image is not dramatized beyond this tableau. This brief tableau and its presentation in verse, however, do provide the reader with an interpretation of the image. In particular, Feuchtwanger's use of enjambment places emphasis on Goya's internal experience of the scene depicted in the aquatint. The enjambments in "sind die / Schlimmsten" and "ist doch / Furchtbar wach" underscore both the horrible threat and Goya's terrible state of mind. Likewise, the separation in the line "Er träumt und ist doch / Furchtbar wach" stresses the contradictoriness of the simultaneity of these two opposed states of consciousness. Feuchtwanger also employs parallelisms and repetition, especially at the end when portraying Goya's mental state: "*sind* in ihm, / *sind* er selber, / *Sind* gleichzeitig in und außer / Ihm" (emphasis mine). Thus underlining the omnipresence of the Demons, their *being* everywhere, Feuchtwanger interprets the creatures in Goya's aquatint as mental creations of the artist which not only oppress his mind, but become independent from their creator and thus also oppress him externally. The image, then, is here represented as a response to a personal, internal attack of demons who originate within the artist's own mind when his reason is sleeping.

The next evocation of the *Sueño de la razón* demonstrates how the artist can overcome this sleep of his reason and banish the monsters from his mind. After learning about his illness, Goya has traveled to his place of birth, Zaragoza, where he stays with his old friend Martin Zapater before seeing his old mother. There, he visits places that were important to him in his youth, such as the chapel of Our Lady del Pilar, whose cupolas he painted. The Virgen del Pilar had been

his source of hope and spiritual guidance before he replaced her with the Virgen de Atocha. Standing now in front of the shrine of the former, he feels that "Ein Stück Leben war ihm abgestroben, und er bedauerte es nicht einmal" (*Goya* 402; "Part of him had died, and he did not even regret it" *This Is* 363). As he walks home through the city, he realizes that Zaragoza is not as he remembers it, but "dreary and dusty" and "silent" (*This Is* 364). This dreariness and desolation is now "around him and within him" (ibid.), producing once again an attack of his mental demons:

> Dann aber kam es wieder, mitten am hellen Tag, das verzweifelte Geträume. Um ihn hockte es, flog es, spukhaft, katzenköpfig, eulenäugig, fledermausflügelig.
>
> Mit furchtbarer Anstrengung riß er sich zusammen, griff zum Stift. Warf sie aufs Papier, die bösen Geister. Da waren sie. Und da er sie auf dem Papier sah, wurde er ruhiger.
>
> An diesem Tag, am nächsten und am übernächsten, ein zweites, ein drittes Mal und immer öfter, ließ er sie aus sich heraus, die Gespenster, auf Papier. So hielt er sie fest, so wurde er sie los. Wenn sie übers Papier krochen und flogen, waren sie nicht mehr gefährlich (*Goya* 402).[168]

In this dramatic ekphrasis, Goya's aquatint is alluded to and evoked by the second sentence, but the rest of this quoted passage dramatizes the image by going beyond the represented scene. Taking the cue from Goya's image, Feuchtwanger interprets the *Sueño de la razón* as an image to be overcome by a vision of reason awakening through the artist's work. Bringing the "evil spirits"

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[168] "And then, in broad daylight, the nightmare of despair came back. It squatted by him, flew about, spectral, cat-headed, owl-eyed, bat-winged. With a fearful effort he pulled himself together, seized a pencil. Dashed them down on paper, the evil sprits. There they were. He spent almost a whole week alone in his bare rooms with his ghosts. He did not shut his eyes against the demons, did not through himself across the table to hide his head from them. He looked them in the face, held onto them till they had revealed themselves to him fully, then forced them and his fear and madness onto paper." (*This Is* 364)

onto paper, Goya is here able to dominate and banish them. In fact, Goya's aquatint is again evoked and simultaneously denied:

> Er schloss nicht die Augen vor den Dämonen, warf sich nicht über den Tisch, um den Kopf vor ihnen zu verbergen. Er schaute ihnen in die Gesichter, hiel sie fest, bis sie sich ihm ganz offenbart hatten, zwang sie und seine Angst und seinen Wahn aufs Papier (*Goya* 402).[169]

This tableau vivant, then, is explicitly portrayed as a counter image to the *Sueño de la razón*. Departing from Goya's original image, this dramatic ekphrasis focuses not on the threat of the demons, but on the artist's ability and power to overcome them when he awakes from his own sleep of reason and combines reason and fantasy to create art. It should be noted, though, that Goya is here working on his preparatory drawings for the *Sueño de la razón* and the *Caprichos*, not yet the final etchings. In fact, the *Sueño* I, with Goya's own likeness in the background together with other indistinct figures and faces, may be explicitly alluded to when Goya now also draws his own face from memory, from the time after his collapse, the "face of his uttermost extremity" (*This Is* 364).

But the demons he draws are not only Goya's internal, mental creations, but are also interpreted as closely connected to his relationship with the Duchess Cayetana de Alba, whom he loves but by whom he also feels betrayed because of her affairs with other men. Thus, he envisions her as part of the *Aquelarre*, the *Witches' Sabbath* (which was historically created almost twenty years after the *Caprichos*). The chapter ends, again in trochees, by emphasizing how Goya's

[169] "He did not shut his eyes against the demons, did not throw himself across the table to hide his head from them. He looked them in the face, held onto them till they had revealed themselves to him fully, then forced them and his fear and madness onto paper" (*This Is* 364).

drawings and paintings of his externalized fears oppressing his mind results in his victory over them:

> So zeichnete Goya Tag für
> Tag. Wirft hin, was durch den Sinn ihm
> Geht. Läßt seinen Träumen freien
> Lauf. Läßt sie heraus aus seinem
> Kopfe kriechen, fliegen, die Dä-
> Monen, die Gespenster, ratten-
> Schwänzig, hundsgesichtig, kröten-
> Mäulig, Cayetana immer
> Unter ihnen. Zeichnet sie mit
> Wüt'ger Inbrunst, hält sie fest, es
> Ist ihm Qual und Lust, sie so zu
> Zeichnen, ist ein beßrer Wahn, fast
> Lustig, nicht so tierisch schmerzhaft
> Wie der Wahn, der ihm die Brust und
> Ihm den Kopf zerdrückt, wenn er nur
> Sitzt und denkt und wird nicht fertig
> mit dem Denken. Nein, solang er
> Zeichnet, darf er närrisch sein. Es
> Ist hellsicht'ger Wahn, er freut sich
> Seiner, er genießt ihn. Und er
> Zeichnet (*Goya* 403-4).[170]

These final verses again take up the demons of the *Sueño de la razón* or its preparatory drawings in lines five to eight, but now explicitly connect this image to Cayetana, thereby re-interpreting the image as intensely personal and private.

It is several chapters later that Goya begins etching those preparatory drawings for the Caprichos. Goya is now back in Madrid, and he is foregrounding

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[170] "Day by day now Goya draws, flings / Out and off what passes through his / Mind. He gives his dreams their fullest / Play. He lets them creep and fly out / Of his head, the demons, specters – Rat-tailed, dog-faced, toad-mouthed / – always / Cayetana is among them. / So he draws her, raging, lusting, / Holds her fast; both lust and torment / 'tis to him to draw her so; he / Feels it is a better madness, / Almost blithe, not quite so beastly / 'Tis to draw her so, as when he / Sits and things, the other madness / Crushing head and breast and never / Finding end to thinking. No, so / Long as he can draw he may be / Foolish, for there is clear-sighted / Folly in it, he enjoys it, / And he draws" (*This Is* 365).

the sarcasm of his drawings more by adding the captions. But as he is working on these etchings, he learns that his best friend, Martín Zapater, with whom he stayed in Zaragoza, has died. Overcome with pain, he gets into a raving fit, blaming alternatively Zapater for deserting him, and himself for his friend's death. He then realizes that he has been prey to the demons within him and it is now that he composes the *Sueño de la razón* as a self-portrait surrounded by the demons:

> Da saßen sie [die Dämonen] um ihm, gräßlich greifbar, in seine Taubheit hinein drang ihr Gekrächz, Geknurr, Gekreisch, er spürte ihren furchtbaren Atem. […]
>
> Er wird fertig mit dem Gezücht, er zwingt es aufs Papier. Zeichnet.
>
> Zeichnet sich selber, übern Tisch geworfen, das Gesicht in den Armen verbergend, und um ihn herum hockt es, das wüste Getümmel der Nacht, Katzengetier, Vogelgetier, Ungeheuer, Eulen und Fledermäuse, riesig, ihn bedrängend. Aus nächster Nähe bedrängen sie ihn: hockt ihm nicht eines der Ungeheuer schon auf dem Rücken? Aber nur an ihn heran dürfen sie, in ihn hinein dürfen sie nicht mehr. Denn einem der wilden, scheußlichen Vogelgeister hat er einen Stichel in die Krallen gezwungen, einen Griffel. Dienen müssen sie ihm, die Gespenster, müssen ihm selber das Werkzueg reichen, die Waffe, sie zu exerzieren, sie aufs Papier zu bannen, dahin, wo sie nicht mehr schaden können (*Goya* 487-88).[171]

This interpretive ekphrasis of the *Sueño de la razón* again emphasizes the artist's power to banish the monsters, to exorcize them by "banning them onto paper." Giving his mental demons a visible shape and form, the artist gains control over them. Goya's aquatint, then, represents for Feuchtwanger Goya's

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[171] "They [the demons] sat around him, horribly palpable, their croaking, growling, and shrieking penetrated his very deafness, he felt their dreadful breath. […]
He will get the upper hand of the brood, force it down onto paper.
He drew. Drew himself, thrown across the table, hiding his head in his hands while around him they squatted, the hideous brood of the night, cat-creatures, bird-creatures, monsters, owls and bats, gigantically oppressing him. They crowd right in upon him – is not one of the monsters already on his back? But they can only come up to him, they can no longer get inside him. For into the claws on one of the bird-specters he forced a tool, a graver. They must serve him, these ghosts, must hand him his tools, the weapons he needs to exorcise them, to consign them to paper where they no longer had power to harm" (*This Is* 443).

struggle with himself and his internal demons, but he emphasizes the artist's victory over them. However, Feuchtwanger also participates at another level in this battle between the artist and his demons. His ekphrastic transposition of this scene of the creation of the *Sueño de la razón* conveys a power to the artist that he does not have in Goya's original aquatint. It is thus only through Feuchtwanger's ekphrasis that Goya can claim his victory. In other words, this ekphrasis not only demonstrates the painter's power, but also that of the author over the painter

By contrast, in Konrad Wolf's film two of the three ekphrases of Goya's *Sueño de la razón* are responses to political situations and have no direct correspondence to episodes in the novel. Another scene in which this aquatint is dramatized occurs after a fight between Goya and Cayetana and thus has a more personal, private dimension. In all three cases, however, the demons originate not within but outside of Goya, and the artist is their helpless victim.

The first ekphrasis of the *Sueño de la razón* is a brief tableau vivant, that is, an interpretive ekphrasis, rather than a dramatic one. Goya has a fight with his aide and friend Agustin Esteve about his un-political stance in which Esteve criticizes Goya for painting only to please his commissioners. Accusing him of vanity and denigrating his paintings as "effektvollen Dreck" ("effect-seeking dirt"), Esteve emphasizes that precisely because of his greater talent, his "lies" are also more dangerous than those of other painters. Goya, however, gets very angry at his aide and takes great offense at his words, but instead of arguing with him, he in turn offends him. In the middle of his raving anger, Goya suffers from a mental attack, and, covering his ears, he sits down at his desk, in the position of

the artist in the *Sueño de la razón*. The camera now shows him from a high angle position, surrounded by drawings for his *Caprichos*, that is, by monsters, beasts and strange creatures from his mind. Although Esteve's voice sounds now somewhat muffled, mirroring Goya's perception of it as he covers his ears, the viewer does not entirely adopt Goya's point of view, but remains outside, looking at him from above without knowing what Goya experiences during this attack. However, the viewer can connect his mental breakdown to Goya's beginning political involvement, which he still denies even as he begins to realize that his talent is not simply a gift, but a responsibility.

The next ekphrasis of the *Sueño de la razón*, in which this aquatint is actually dramatized, occurs again after a fight, this time between Goya and his mistress Cayetana. Against Goya's will, she has decided to go hunting with another one of her suitors. When Goya shows her his sketch of *Volaverunt*, which shows her flying through the air with three men below her, she angrily destroys it with a knife. After she has gone, Goya has another attack of deafness and madness. He hears voices, sounds and noises, but no real sounds from the external world, so when he destroys the room, throwing furniture out of his window, nothing is heard. By thus aligning the viewer with Goya's internal experience of silence, Wolf's cinematic ekphrasis produces viewer proximity to the character. As Goya lies down on the floor, face down, his room is invaded by strange figures form his paintings, mostly the *Caprichos* and *Pinturas negras*, who encircle him. Although Goya is here not sitting at his desk in the position of the *Sueño de la razón*, the scene is reminiscent of that image in that it shows the artist surrounded

by strange creatures from his imagination, during a "sleep of reason" of the artist's mind. Unlike in the novel, however, the artist is here clearly at the mercy of these demons. Unable to banish or dominate them, he has to wait until they disappear.

The final dramatization of the *Sueño de la razón* takes place toward the end of the film when Goya is called before the Inquisitor to justify and explain his *Caprichos*. In particular, he is asked to elucidate the meaning of the caption of plate 23, *Aquellos polbos* (*From such dust such dirt must come*), in which a prostitute is brought before an Inquisition tribunal. The caption reads: "¡Mal hecho! A una muger de onor, que por una friolera servía a todo el mundo, tan dilijente, tan útil, tratarla así. ¡Mal hecho!" (qtd. in López-Rey 194).[172] When the Inquisitor persists in asking Goya who does wrong to that woman, and Goya finally answers "die Dämonen" ("the demons"), the dramatic ekphrasis begins: A montage of various *Capricho* images, especially those of witches and demons (e.g. *Los Duendecitos, Volaverunt, Ya es hora*), mostly in close-ups of detail shots, fills the screen, interspersed with a close-up of the Inquisitor's face. The montage is interrupted by a glimpse of the growing stack of papers in front of Goya which indicate the progression of the interview. At the moment when Goya answers a question the viewer does not hear or read, declaring that he does believe in God, the *Sueño de la razón* itself is projected in a medium shot, showing the artist sitting at his desk, with the animal creatures around him. This image starts another montage of further *Caprichos*, again with close-ups of the

[172] "That is wrong! To treat in such a way an honorable woman who waited on everyone for a trifle; she who was so industrious, so useful, to be so treated. It is really wrong!" (qtd. in López-Rey 194).

Inquisitor in between. Both series of montages are accompanied by rhythmic hand-clapping, which in the second montage becomes increasingly faster and more nervous, perhaps mirroring Goya's heartbeat, until it ends with a long shot across the Inquisitor's table.

The montage then, indicates the progression of the interview and Goya's increasing sense of threat from the Inquisitor. This montage of *Capricho* images thus can be interpreted as a dramatic ekphrasis of the *Sueño de la razón*. Showing Goya sitting at a table, threatened by the demonic power of the Inquisition, this montage emphasizes the connection between Goya's *Capricho 43* and Spain's current political situation as in a state of dormant reason (due to the repression of Enlightenment thinkers), drawing an analogy between the activity of the Inquisition and being haunted by the demons. Spain's sleep of reason, then, has led to the dream of power of the Inquisition, thereby producing monstrous conditions of surveillance and suppression. The fact that the *Sueño de la razón* itself is projected at a central moment during the montage (initiating the second one) and remains on the screen for a comparatively long time, further underscores Goya's experience of the Inquisitor's questioning in similar terms as being haunted by demons. Moreover, the film alludes ironically to Goya's inability to banish these demons with his pen when the montage begins again after a shot of Goya surrounded by pages of the Inquisitor's writing. The pen is here not his tool for expelling the demons, but the Inquisitor's instrument of verbal torture. Goya thus remains helplessly at the mercy of the demons and the Inquisitor. But even though the Inquisitor is completely integrated into the montage, he is clearly

marked off as actual threat, as opposed to the imaginary one in the etchings, by his bright red cloak which signals the intrusion of the real.

In none of Wolf's three ekphrases of the *Sueño de la razón* is Goya ever depicted as representing himself in order to dominate and banish his inner demons. On the contrary, the "demons" that confront him in this film are generally external ones, originating in interpersonal conflicts with his friends or socio-political conflicts with the Inquisition. Moreover, none of them, not even the ekphrasis deriving from the personal conflict with Cayetana, emphasizes the aesthetic dimension so central to the ekphrases of the novel. Whereas the Goya of the novel grows not only personally and politically, but also artistically, the Goya of the film develops mostly in terms of political commitment. Furthermore, the artist's ability in the novel to expel the demons and to combine fantasy and reason with his art is not an option for the Goya of the film. Thus, whereas the novel focuses on the need to overcome the demons, interpreting Goya's *Capricho* 43 as image of the artist's victory, the film underscores the artist's defeat and helplessness rather than his triumph over the forces oppressing his mind.

In short, as the comparison of ekphrasis in the novel and the film has shown, Wolf's film has different and additional ekphrases, as well as different types. By thus altering the novel's ekphrases, the film also changes its focus and emphasis. Not only does the film shift the novel's emphasis on personal-aesthetic development to one on socio-political involvement, but it also alters the novel's faith in the artist's (personal, aesthetic) victory and power to a portrayal of the artist's threat, defeat and helplessness in politics. Thus whereas art functions as

medium of knowledge in Feuchtwanger, in Wolf it becomes a political tool. The analysis of ekphrasis thus points us to the different functions of art, aesthetically motivated in the text and politically motivated in the film.

Many of Wolf's changes in the ekphrasis of Goya's *Sueño de la razón* relate to what seems to be his overall agenda in adapting Feuchtwanger's novel to the screen, that is, its greater emphasis on the artist's political development as opposed to his aesthetic one in conjunction with socio-political involvement. This change may be due to the film's circumstances of production, in other words, the East German-Soviet co-production of the film, which may have been interested in promoting the need for a politically committed art. However, whereas the ekphrases of Goya's *Capricho* 43 in the novel pinpoint the artist's power to banish his inner, personal demons, in the film the ekphrases point to his defeat and his fear of the "demons" afflicting himself and society. Feuchtwanger's novel is thus not only more optimistic, it is also more modest in terms of the artist's sphere of effectiveness, while Wolf's film is both more demanding about the artist's usefulness in society, and more pessimistic and disillusioned about his success. The ekphrases of the *Sueño de la razón*, in short, pinpoint Wolf's greater disenchantment with the "demonic" powers in society, both those of Goya and his own (e.g. the Stasi, censure, etc.) and with a possible social Enlightenment.

## CONCLUSION

In spite of these different interpretations of Goya's aquatint, the novel's and film's use of ekphrasis have a similar effect on the reader and viewer: The use

of ekphrasis in both produces a certain ambiguity between distance and empathy toward the protagonist, which the novel achieves through free indirect discourse, and the film by assigning different perspectives to different types of ekphrasis. In Feuchtwanger's novel, the use of free indirect discourse for many ekphrases from Goya's perspective on the one hand gives access to Goya's thoughts and perceptions, but on the other, the narrator's ironic stance also places the reader at a distance from the protagonist. Thus, in spite of reproducing the character's perspective and perception, this device achieves a certain degree of distance between the reader and the characters, since the reader has access to the characters' minds and thoughts only via the language of the narrator.[173] Moreover, in Feuchtwanger, the use of free indirect discourse is often coupled with strong narratorial irony, especially in the trochees at the chapter endings. These trochaic four-feet lines at the end of each chapter are an imitation of the verse meter of old Spanish Romanceros, that is, folk ballads, associated with Lope de Vega, Calderón de la Barca and the *Cantar del mio Cid* (*Song of the Cid*). Narratively, Feuchtwanger's often deliberately simple verses serve as conclusion or summary of what happened in the chapter. Moreover, not only do the verses in this historical novel achieve a certain Spanish "local color" (cf. Washausen 102) by pointing to an old Spanish tradition, but they also emphasize Goya's "low" origin and his connection to the people, rather than nobility.[174] But the use of this traditional verse meter in a novel otherwise written in very contemporary and

[173] Cf. Gerald Prince, *Narratology: the form and functioning of narrative* (Berlin, New York, Amsterdam: Mouton Publishers, 1982) 48; and Rimmon-Kenan 115.
[174] This emphasis on Goya's low origin, prevalent throughout the novel, is another one of Feuchtwanger's liberties with history, although Goya was in fact born in a respected middle class family (cf. Hermand 81).

colloquial language also serves as a sort of Brechtian *Verfremdungseffekt* and contributes to the novel's irony.

In fact, these verse endings often underscore the narrator's ironical stance and distance toward his characters. For example, in the first ekphrasis of the *Sueño de la razón* which I have quoted above, the balladesque verse form and poetic language are at odds with the description of Goya's feeling of being attacked by his inner demons and his lack of control. Likewise, in the second quote Feuchtwanger uses particularly striking enjambments that split not only sentences but also words ("…die Dä- / Monen, die Gespenster, ratten- / Schwänzig, hundsgesichtig, kröten-/ Mäulig…," *Goya* 403). But here, in contrast to the first quote, the unruly, disconnected language jars with Goya's ostensible domination of the demons and ghosts.

In Wolf's film, there is a similar ambiguity between distance and proximity to the artist. Throughout the film, Goya's works are discussed in depictive or interpretive ekphrases from other people's points of view rather than the artist's own, deleting Goya's own verbalizations of his works. At no time, for example, does Goya verbalize the *Sueño de la razón*. However, in the dramatic ekphrases, the camera movement and montage often reproduce Goya's perspective, his pre- or non-verbal perceptions about his work, similar to the function of free indirect discourse in the novel, and thus provoke viewer identification with the artist. This wavering between identification and distance is perhaps the most palpable in the first scene of interpretive ekphrasis, where the camera adopts a high angle position, showing Goya from above, from an external

point of view. Yet, during the same scene, Goya's perception is mirrored when the audience hears Agustin's voice as muffled as Goya in his sudden attack of deafness and with his hands over his ears.

The montages in the second and third ekphrastic scenes (the dramatic ekphrases) also waver between viewer proximity and distance to the protagonist. In the second scene, when Goya's room is invaded by strange creatures from several of his paintings which surround him as he lies on the floor, the camera is at times above Goya in a wide-angle frame, but also shows frequent close-ups of the beasts from the low angle position of the supine Goya. Adopting the protagonist's perspective, the camera shows these figures from a stable point of view, passing into and out of the artist's range of vision in apparently circular motion around him, becoming blurrier as they leave his field of perception. Toward the end, the montage becomes faster and includes other visions of the hallucinating Goya, such as a brief shot of the life model for the *Naked Maja*, Cayetana, and a quick montage of further blurry visions of her and unidentifiable forms and shapes. The camera thus invites the viewer to see and experience the end of the scene from Goya's perspective.

Likewise, during the Inquisition interview sequence, the montage establishes both distance and viewer proximity to Goya. It begins and ends with an external perspective when the viewer watches Goya from an external observer's standpoint, which at the very end is a wide-angle distance shot. But in between, the quick-changing images of demons and witches and the fast, nervous handclapping, make the viewer experience Goya's nervousness and dizzying

torment during the inquisitorial interview. By integrating shots of the Inquisitor in the montage of *Capricho* etchings, the camera further points to Goya's perspective and his mental association of being assailed by the demons and besieged by the Inquisitor.

This use of ekphrases in Feuchtwanger and Wolf achieves a similar effect: both imply that art is not only what the artist intends it to be, but is comprised of multiple points of view, experiences and interpretations. Both thus posit that art may reveal greater truths than the artist may know or intend and that it may go beyond the artist's own frame of mind. The film does so through the contrast between viewer proximity to the protagonist in some ekphrastic scenes on the one hand, and ekphrasis from other people's points of view, on the other. The novel achieves this through the use of free indirect discourse which juxtaposes Goya's inner thoughts and the narrator's ironic voice.

Feuchtwanger's subjective, intimate ekphrases, many of which represent Goya's innermost thoughts or his pre-verbal perceptions about his works, often imply that the artist himself does not completely realize the scope and meaning of his art. Through the use of free indirect discourse, Feuchtwanger is able to contrast Goya's internal thoughts and emotions and the narrator's ironic voice. In so doing, Feuchtwanger provides the reader both with immediate access to Goya's thoughts and pre-verbal perceptions, as well as with an interpretive, analytical distance toward them. Cinematic ekphrasis, by contrast, cannot be subjective and intimate in a similar way (unless it resorts to the use of voice-over, which is often awkward), but must either be verbalized in direct speech (descriptive or

interpretive ekphrases), or visually enacted and dramatized (interpretive or dramatic ekphrases).

Feuchtwanger's use of ekphrasis coupled with trochee verses at the end of each chapter is not only a means for achieving local color and *Verfremdungseffekt*, but also marks the text as hybrid, as a compound of prose, poetry and art. The use of ekphrasis as well as poetry in a prose novel underscores its own artistic status and emphasizes its ability to combine and unify the three art forms in one. Similarly, Wolf's film competes with both the author and the painter by constructing his own visual, speaking and moving images of the *Sueño de la razón*, adapting and appropriating both Goya's aquatint and Feuchtwanger's ekphrasis of that image. In resisting adaptation of Feuchtwanger's ekphrases and instead creating his own animations and enactments of the *Sueño de la razón*, Wolf uses dramatic ekphrasis to emphasize film's potential to enact paintings to make them living, speaking, moving pictures. While the paragone is thus present in both the literary and the filmic ekphrases, the film underscores its competition not only with the visual arts but also with the literary text. By competing with both the visual and the verbal arts, Wolf's film emphasizes its status as hybrid medium that both combines and goes beyond the visual *and* verbal arts.

# Chapter 5:
# From Screenplay to Film: Rembrandt's Self-Portraits and Social Identity Construction through Ekphrasis

## INTRODUCTION

Although the actual number of Rembrandt's self portraits is still debated, the Dutch seventeenth-century artist represented himself more than any artist before, and possibly after him, in at least forty paintings, about thirty-one etchings, and several drawings.[175] But just as their exact number is controversial, so is their motivation. While H. Perry Chapman claims they are largely "internally motivated" studies of "penetrating self-scrutiny" (3) in a period of "rising individualism" (4), Ernst van de Wetering argues "that the prevailing view of the self portrait as a means for 'self-examination' is an anachronism when applied to the period before 1800" (19). Moreover, as he explains, the term "self portrait" did not exist in the seventeenth-century. Instead, he proposes to see Rembrandt's self portraits as a means of self-promotion: it "provided the purchaser with both the portrait of a celebrated artist and a display of the mastery that had made him famous in the first place" (30). It is certainly true, as Chapman also recognizes, that the enormous number of self portraits is also a projection of Rembrandt's self

[175] The number of self portraits varies greatly, because Rembrandt has depicted himself not only in traditional self portraits, but there are also numerous occasions in which he has inserted his likeness into a historical or biblical painting. Not all of these are recognized as self portraits by all Rembrandt scholars. The above numbers come from Ernst van de Wetering, "The Multiple Functions of Rembrandt's Self Portraits," *Rembrandt by Himself*, eds. Christopher White and Quentin Buvelot (London: National Gallery; The Hague: Royal Cabinet of Paintings Mauritshuis, 1999) 10. Similarly, Perry H. Chapman sets the total number of self portraits at "at least seventy-five" (*Rembrandt's Self-Portraits: A Study in Seventeenth-Century Identity* [Princeton, N.J.: Princeton UP, 1990] 3).

image to the public, in other words, tied to the art market and Rembrandt's social aspirations (7).

As various critics have noted, many of the myths around Rembrandt were probably directly derived from his self portraits, that is, from the view of himself that the artist wanted to propagate and disseminate.[176] Thus, for example the myth of Rembrandt as the isolated genius did not first emerge in the Romantic era, but was fostered and developed by the artist himself. In an image such as the 1930 etching *Self Portrait as Beggar*, Rembrandt portrays himself as beggar snarling defiantly into the viewer's face, fostering the view of the anti-bourgeois and social outcast. However, during the latter decades of the twentieth century Rembrandt scholarship has not only de-mythologized much of this romantic view of Rembrandt, but has substituted a rather negative view of Rembrandt as a "bitter, vindictive, […] underhanded and untrustworthy" person.[177] Moreover, scholars have begun to question Rembrandt's authorship with regard to several acclaimed paintings previously attributed to him, such as the *Polish Rider* and the *Man with a Golden Helmet*.[178] Thus, for a poststructuralist scholar like Mieke Bal, Rembrandt functions like "a cultural text, rather than a historical reality" and his name stands as shorthand for the complex of works attributed to him, as a title of a text rather than that of an individual.[179]

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[176] E.g. Christopher Wright, *Rembrandt: Self-Portraits* (New York: Viking, 1982) 23.
[177] Gary Schwartz, *Rembrandt: His Life, his Paintings* (New York: Viking, 1985) 362.
[178] Cf. Svetlana Alpers, *Rembrandt's Enterprise: The Studio and the Market* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988) 2.
[179] Mieke Bal, *Reading "Rembrandt": Beyond the Word-Image Opposition* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991) 7.

But even at the beginning of the 20th century, the romanticized view of Rembrandt had begun to be challenged and negative facts about Rembrandt's character were known, although they did not contribute to the prevailing public view of the artist.[180] In view of these changing faces of Rembrandt, how do twentieth-century literary texts and films interpret his self portraits and construct his identity for the reader or viewer, thereby shaping the public view of Rembrandt? Do these literary and cinematic works of "high art" (among which I count Korda's film as well) contribute to the Rembrandt myths and the stereotypes about artists or do they aim at revealing a different Rembrandt by re-interpreting his self portraits? Or are they really about "Rembrandt" at all?

In this chapter, I compare the use of Rembrandt's self portraits in Alexander Korda's film *Rembrandt* (1936) with their uses in Carl Zuckmayer's screenplay-drama[181] for that film from the same year. At first sight it may seem

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[180] In his biography of Alexander Korda, Paul Tabori mentions that the actor Charles Laughton criticized Korda's Rembrandt for romanticizing and making Rembrandt look nicer than he actually was, thus indicating that other versions of Rembrandt's life were known at that time. Cf. Paul Tabori, *Alexander Korda* (New York: Living Books, 1966) 164. Likewise, Martin Stockham mentions that disagreements arose between Korda and Laughton when Korda refused to film a "factually true scene where Rembrandt sells the grave plot of his first wife to pay of the wedding to his second" for fear that the movie public would not like it. Cf. Martin Stockham, *The Korda Collection: Alexander Korda's Film Classics* (London: Boxtree Limited, 1992) 72.

[181] As various critics have noted, Zuckmayer's *Rembrandt*, his first screenplay that was actually filmed and composed entirely by Zuckmayer, actually appears more like a play than a screenplay. In fact, according to Horst Claus, all that reminds one of a film are the rapid changes of locale and an initial dissolve (271).Like a drama, this screenplay is divided into 5 acts with a total of 35 scenes, and its "progression is not based on a spectacular or complicated plot but on the inner development of Rembrandt" (ibid), a focus which, for another critic makes Rembrandt a "typical Zuckmayerian hero" (Wagner 152). Hans Wagener also indicates the double status of this text as both screenplay and drama in the title of his article, "Carl Zuckmayers *Rembrandt*: Drehbuch und Drama," and he focuses on the play's dramatic structure with anti-climactic action and a series of "blows of fate" (153). Moreover, Zuckmayer himself has emphasized the literary significance of this screenplay as a text, and its equal value to his plays (noted on the front inside cover of the book). Cf. Horst Claus, "Whose Film is it? Alexander Korda's Adaptation of Carl Zuckmayer's Film Script *Rembrandt*," *Text into Image: Image Into Text*, eds. Jeff Morrison and Florian Krobb [Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 1997] 271), and Hans Wagener, "Carl Zuckmayers *Rembrandt*:

that both of these works equally perpetuate the myth of the isolated genius and his rebellion against bourgeois society. Both the screenplay and the film depict the artist's life and career from around 1640 to his death in 1669. Narrating the fall from his height of fame to his end as a lonely old man without money or recognition, the text and film emphasize Rembrandt's inner development and his acceptance of his fate by finding satisfaction in his work. The surface story, then, in entirely in line with a romanticizing hagiography of Rembrandt. However, by analyzing the use of ekphrasis, these works also allow for a different reading. If the interpretive ekphrases of the self portraits in Zuckmayer's screenplay and Korda's film are recognized and analyzed, the screenplay and movie present another version of Rembrandt's self portraits that challenges the traditional, romanticizing one. For the film viewer who identifies and analyzes the self portrait tableaux vivants, the film (and screenplay) presents a Rembrandt who consciously shapes and promotes his public image.

Futhermore, on the surface, Korda seems to have made many changes to Zuckmayer's screenplay. Horst Claus' "Whose Film is it? Alexander Korda's Adaptation of Carl Zuckmayer's Film Script Rembrandt" emphasizes the amount of changes to the screenplay; changes he believes are due to the cultural horizon of expectations of Korda's British audience, for whom the filmmaker preferred to reinforce "the sentimental elements by toning down many of the down-to-earth characterizations and actions" (274). Thus, according to Claus, "less than 50% of Zuckmayer's lines have been retained in Korda's film, and these amount to only

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Drehbuch und Drama," *Michigan German Studies* 12.2 (1986): 151-163. Furthermore, the screenplay has been published as a paperback by the popular Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag in 1981, making it readily available to the reading public, independently of the film.

60% of the words spoken on the screen" (268) Yet, he admits that nevertheless, "the characters and the plot adhere closely to Zuckmayer's concept" (ibid), and that the film incorporates almost all of Zuckmayer's visual suggestions, sometimes modifying them.

Korda follows this agenda also with regard to ekphrasis. Art works mentioned in Zuckmayer's script are never shown in the film; rather, Korda visualizes Rembrandt's art through his own cinematic tableaux. Likewise, while the text does not specify what Rembrandt looks like in each scene, that is, gives no indication about his resemblance to or enactment of his self portraits, Korda shows Charles Laughton in poses or garments reminiscent of Rembrandt self portraits at important moments throughout the film. Korda thus deliberately exploits film's unique ability to represent a particular self-image of Rembrandt and translate it to the cinematic medium. The film, then, takes up the Zuckmayer's cues but intensifies the subtext of the screenplay which reveals a different story of Rembrandt that contrasts with its linear storyline of the artist's inner development and external downfall.

This relationship between the screenplay and the film can be better understood by drawing on reception studies and the concept of indeterminacies and gaps ("Unbestimmtheitsstellen") that are filled in or removed by the act of "concretizing" the text.[182] Even more than a novel, which is meant to be read, a screenplay is primarily meant to be enacted and seen. While the novel is enacted and concretized privately in the individual act of reading, the screenplay is

[182] Cf. Roman Ingarden, *Vom Erkennen des literarischen Kunstwerks* (Darmstatt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1968), esp. 49ff., and Wolfgang Iser, *Der Akt des Lesens* (München: W. Fink Verlag, 1994) 269-74.

concretized by the film for an audience. In other words, the concretization of the screenplay by the filmmaker is always public. Therefore, the screenplay, although often published and available to the public as "text," must be read in terms of its filmic potential, as text to be visualized and concretized in(to) filmic images. Thus, Zuckmayer's use of attributive ekphrases in the screenplay may become interpretive ekphrases in their possible concretization.

Although the film was highly praised by some critics when it was first released, it has also been harshly criticized and was, in fact, a box office failure.[183] For Graham Greene, writing in *The Spectator* on 20 November 1936, "the film is ruined by a lack of story and continuity: it has no drive. Like *The Private Life of Henry the Eighth*, it is a series of unrelated tableaux" (Drazin 152). Another criticism, voiced for example by John A. Walker in his *Arts & Artist on Screen*, regards the lack of actual art works in the film, which, in his view "somewhat contradicts the film's relentless propaganda on behalf of Rembrandt and his art." And he concludes by asking "[i]f it is so great why is it not shown?" (24). In fact, although Rembrandt is often shown in the act of painting, very few of the paintings he works on or has finished are represented. Furthermore, throughout the film, Rembrandt has long monologues that show him more effective as a speaker than as a painter.

As I will show, however, an ekphrastic approach to this film will challenge these negative assessments, demonstrating that the film, instead of showing Rembrandt's paintings, transforms them into tableaux vivants, and thus

[183] Cf. Paul Tabori, *Alexander Korda* (New York: Living Books, 1966) 149-65 and Charles Drazin, *Korda: Britain's Only Movie Mogul* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 2002) 150-53.

transmedializes them in ways more appropriate for the cinematic medium. Likewise, the presentation of Rembrandt as public speaker can be seen as a transformation of an important aspect of Rembrandt's works, many of which depict moments of speech or dialogue. And this interpretation of Rembrandt as painter of speaking, of language, is in fact a feature common to the film and the play.

In short, Zuckmayer's screenplay and Korda's film can be considered as two early, creative, criticisms of Rembrandt's social identity. By analyzing the transmedialization of the self-portraits into the text and the film, I will show how Zuckmayer and Korda expose Rembrandt's public identity construction and reveal the gaps between painted image and historical or personal identity. Both the writer and the filmmaker use ekphrasis to emphasize their independence from the visual artist and to highlight their own construction of "Rembrandt" (in the sense of Mieke Bal) by creating verbal and visual self portraits of the artist, which are reminiscent of, but depart from Rembrandt's own.[184] By deliberately using the self portraits to shape and create their own portrait of "Rembrandt," Zuckmayer and Korda participate in the mythmaking of and around the artist, while at the same time using interpretive ekphrasis to expose that mythmaking and to reveal both his and their own tools for creating and shaping Rembrandt's public identity. But while both the text and the film thus compete with the artist's visual crafting of his public identity, the film, unlike the text, is also able to comment on that

[184] Modifying Mieke Bal's usage of quotation marks around Rembrandt's name, I will use "Rembrandt" in quotation marks if I refer to Zuckamayer and Korda's cinematic and textual reconstruction of him, but without quotation marks if I refer to the historical figure Rembrandt.

competition on another level, by reenacting the antagonism and competition between word and image in its own medium.

## SELF-STYLIZATION IN REMBRANDT'S SELF PORTRAITS

Like van de Wetering, I consider Rembrandt's self portraits not primarily as a means of self-knowledge; but rather as a "carefully planned programme" (Raupp, qtd. in Wetering 19) for the artist's identity construction. According to van de Wetering, they functioned "on the one hand as portrait of an *uomo famoso* and on the other hand […] an autograph specimen of the reason for that fame" (31). In other words, Rembrandt used them as self-stylization and self-promotion. His portraits also allowed Rembrandt to experiment with different social, public roles, to which the vast number of self portraits in costumes bears witness.[185] Interestingly, it is only in later life that he depicts himself as painter or in the act of painting, seemingly denouncing his role-play and presenting him as what he is. Moreover, he also appears to become increasingly unrelenting about his appearance, emphasizing his wrinkles and marks of age with "photographic realism."[186] Yet, as I will discuss below, these portraits may still be part of the program of promoting and shaping his public image. In short, an interpretation that sees Rembrandt's late self portraits as "an interior dialogue: a lonely old man

[185] Among others, these are for example: *Self Portrait with plumed beret*, 1629; *Self Portrait as Beggar*, 1630; *Self Portrait in Oriental Attire*, 1631; *Self Portrait with Helmet*, 1634; *Self Portrait as the Prodigal Son in the Tavern*, 1635; *Self portrait in Sixteenth-Century Apparel*, 1638; *Self Portrait as Apostle Paul*, 1661; *Self Portrait as Zeuxis* (*Laughing Self Portrait*), 1669.
[186] Kenneth Clark, *An Introduction to Rembrandt* (London: J. Murray, 1978) 26.

communicating with himself while he painted"[187] does not sufficiently explain these works.

Moreover, due to the different market and new socio-economic circumstances, a new system of patronage emerged that also forced the artists to reconsider their roles (ibid. 6). Thus, many of Rembrandt's self portraits also represent his pictorial redefinition of his artistic self and his professional identity. In fact, in several self portraits, he depicts himself in sixteenth or even fifteenth-century attire, emphasizing an emulation of famous predecessors such as Dürer (van de Wetering 44). This is the case, for example in his *Self Portrait at the Age of 34* (1640, London, National Gallery), and it is this picture that Alexander Korda's film begins with.

**Artistic Ambitions: *Self Portrait at the Age of 34***

Leaning over a balustrade with his right arm, Rembrandt is turning towards and looking directly at the viewer. His clothing is not contemporary, but a costume consisting of pieces dating between 1520 and 1530.[188] Such *portraits a l'antique* were coming into vogue and appealed to the elite class. Thus, critics have often assumed that Rembrandt wanted to portray his social rank and social climbing in this self portrait. And indeed, it was painted at the height of his success, two years before *The Night Watch*. However, more than social

[187] Manuel Gasser, *Das Selbstbildnis* (Zürich: Kindler, 1961) 88. (Translation quoted in van de Wetering 10.)

[188] *Rembrandt by himself,* eds. Christopher White and Quentin Buvelot (London: National Gallery; The Hague: Royal Cabinet of Paintings Mauritshuis, 1999) 173. This exhibition catalog of Rembrandt's self portraits provides helpful information about the production, style, history, and interpretations of each picture. From here on, it will be cited as *Rembrandt* in the text.

aspirations, it seems to portray his artistic ambitions and his emulation of painters of the past. Not only does this self portrait show connections to Raphael's *Portrait of Baldassare Castiglione* (before 1516) and Titian's *Portrait of a Man* (Ariosto) (c. 1512), two eminent Italian Renaissance masters, but moreover, Rembrandt's pose recalls that of Albrecht Dürer in his well-known Prado *Self Portrait* of 1498. Furthermore, the clothing was "carefully composed from a variety of examples in prints, in particular "portraits believed to depict Lucas van Leyden," a Dutch artist active between 1508 and 1533 (*Rembrandt* 173). This self portrait, then, represents Rembrandt's emulation of his great predecessors, both Italian and Northern European artists, thus asserting "his standing in the grand lineage of European painting" (Chapman 70).

**Three Self Portraits as Painter**

It was only in the 1660s that Rembrandt portrayed himself as painter, wearing working clothes and with the tools of his craft. The first of these is the *Self Portrait at the Easel*, from 1660 (Paris, Musée du Louvre). Here, Rembrandt appears to be seated in front of a wooden panel on the right of the canvas, turned toward the viewer with his palette in this left hand and his maulstick in the right. While his clothing "contains sixteenth-century elements" (*Rembrandt* 211), his white cap is contemporary, and somewhat resembles the one he wears in the later *Self Portrait as Zeuxis* and the *Self Portrait with Two Circles* (c.1665-9) in which he also depicts himself as painter. His face appears less round here and more

worn, and the hair shorter, thinner and more gray than in other self portraits from the same period or later.

According to H. Perry Chapman, this painting "allow[s] us greater insight into [Rembrandt's] character" (95) since he no longer represents himself in costumes that indicate his social status. Moreover, the painting represents a reformulation of a Dutch self portrait tradition based on Leonardo da Vinci, in which the painter represented himself in refined clothes so as to proclaim the intellectual dignity of his work. For Chapman, Rembrandt's working clothes and cap demonstrate the artist's defiance and reformulation of that tradition, "replacing it with an original and independent image of the artist as craftsman" (96). In so doing, he asserts his "natural inborn talent" as opposed to the learned Humanist painter (97). However, I think just as Rembrandt had previously cultivated his self image through costumes and social roles, so does he now disseminate the image of the independent, autonomous artist and the social and artistic rebel, thus continuing to shape the way he wants to be seen. Especially in light of the fact that Rembrandt has significantly altered this painting (like most others, as the catalog *Rembrandt by Himself* shows), such as the beret, his pose and the position of his left hand, it becomes clear that Rembrandt consciously emphasizes both his independence from and his reformulation of the artistic tradition of self-portraiture.

The *Self Portrait as Zeuxis* (c. 1662, Cologne, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum) is another, more obvious instance of such a deliberate shaping of Rembrandt's artistic role. It is now widely accepted as representing Rembrandt in the role of

the renowned artist from classical antiquity, the Greek painter Zeuxis of the late fifth century BC. But this interpretation and the consequent change of titles have gained currency only during the last couple of decades, after Albert Blankert's influential article on this self portrait.[189] Moreover, while earlier critics have considered it to be one of Rembrandt's last, if not the last self portrait, the recent exhibition *Rembrandt by Himself* has dated it earlier, around 1662, thus dispelling the notion that Rembrandt "was alluding here to his own approaching death" (219).

Part of the trouble with this self portrait is the fact that in its present form, the painting is not in its original state, but was probably cropped at the left and seems to have had later additions (Blankert 33). Rembrandt represents himself here with a painter's cap, a mantle, a medallion around his neck, and a maulstick in one of his hands, thus clearly stylizing himself as painter. He is turning to the viewer with a laughing expression. On the left side of the canvas, part of the painting he is working on can be seen, yet because of its vagueness and the possible cropping, this figure has been variously identified as a herm, or Terminus, the God of Death;[190] as the bust of the weeping philosopher Heraclitus, painted by the laughing Democritus;[191] and as an old woman, painted by the legendary classical painter Zeuxis (cf. Blankert).

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[189] Albert Blankert, "Rembrandt, Zeuxis, and Ideal Beauty," *Album Amicorum J.G. van Gelder*, eds. J. G. van Gelder and J. Bruyn (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1973) 32-39.

[190] Cf. Jan Bialstocki, "Rembrandt's Terminus," *Wallraf-Richartz-Jahrbuch* 28 (1966): 49-60.

[191] Wolfgang Stechow, "Rembrandt-Democritus," *The Art Quarterly* 7.4 (1944): 232-38 takes up an earlier critic, F. Schmidt-Degener, who had suggested an identification of Rembrandt with the philosopher Democritus painting Heraclitus. This interpretation was also accepted and supported by Simon Schama in his influential biography of the artist (676-77), and is most likely the one known to Zuckmayer and Korda, as Schmidt-Degener's book *Rembrandt und der holländische Barock* was translated into German in 1928.

The interpretation of Rembrandt painting the God of Death is based on the dating of the painting to 1669, the year of his death, but is invalidated with the re-dating to 1662. Likewise, the identification of Rembrandt with Democritus painting Heraclitus does not take into account his role as painter but only his laughing expression.[192] By contrast, Blankert's detailed analysis of Rembrandt as Zeuxis explains convincingly how this self portrait fits into a tradition of literary references to Zeuxis and into Rembrandt's concept of himself as artist and his art. Moreover, the earliest mention of the painting, in 1761 when the painting was probably still in its original state, identifies it as "Rembrandt painting an old woman […] by himself" (qtd. in Blankert 34). Although Democritus is the "best known laughing figure in Dutch seventeenth-century iconography," there is one literary reference that depicts the painter, Zeuxis laughing while painting an old woman: *De verborum significatione*, a dictionary assembled in Augustus' time by Marcus Verrius Flaccus (ibid. 35). More significantly, Karel van Mander's *Schilder-Boeck*, a handbook for Dutch artists, narrates a relevant anecdote: "Zeuxis is said to have departed from his life while laughing immoderately, choking while painting a funny, wrinkled old woman in the flesh" (ibid.). And according to Blankert, this was not an isolated reference, but recurred in other sources as well. Moreover, Rembrandt's pupil Arent de Gelder painted the same subject in 1685, and critics have noted many similarities between the two works (ibid 34; *Rembrandt* 216-29).

[192] The Greek philosopher Democritus (460-371BCE) was already in Antiquity called the "laughing philosopher" because of his teachings. He held that the highest goal is happiness, which consists in serenity of the soul and is best achieved through moderation and a balanced and harmonious life. Cf. "Demokritos," *Philosophisches Wörterbuch*, ed. Georgi Schischkoff (Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner Verlag, , 1991) 124.

Thus, as was the case with the *Self Portrait at the Easel*, Rembrandt here expresses his ambition to identify and compete with a famous painter from the past. Furthermore, this anecdote about Zeuxis must have struck Rembrandt particularly because it showed him that Zeuxis was not only a painter of ideal beauty, but that he, like Rembrandt himself, also painted ugly old women without embellishments. Once again Rembrandt is asserting himself as painter. Although, as the catalog *Rembrandt by Himself* claims, there is no conclusive evidence that Rembrandt's work attracted criticism "of his stubborn refusal to idealise reality" (219), it is still conceivable that he laughs in the face of the viewer, expressing his superiority to (and defiance of) a tradition of painting only ideal beauty.

Rembrandt has portrayed himself as painter or in clothing reminiscent of earlier painters in other later self portraits. For example in the *Self Portrait with Two Circle*s (1665-9, London, Kenwood House), he faces the viewer, palette and paintbrushes in hand, and in the *Self Portrait at the Age of 63* (1669, London, National Gallery), he had originally held a paintbrush which he later painted out, and represents himself in apparel from fifteenth and sixteenth century painters. In his very last *Self Portrait* (1669, Mauritshuis, The Hague), however, Rembrandt is neither wearing any specific clothing, nor does he depict himself as painter (although he did have a painter's cap in an earlier stage of the work, which he later painted out and replaced with a "lopsided turban" (*Rembrandt* 231). The artist clearly looks older here than in other self portraits, and the painting itself appears as if it was left unfinished, which, together with the fact that it was for a long time the only self portrait known to have been painted in the year of

Rembrandt's death, "has provoked countless reflections on the artist's approaching death that could supposedly be read in his features" (ibid. 229). For example, Simon Schama describes his face as "a ruthlessly detailed map of time's attrition" and sees in this picture a "process of dismantling his ego" (680). Similarly, his acknowledgement of a "lively contrast between resignation and resolution" and "an affirmation with his last breath of the audacity and confidence in his hand" (ibid.), represents a romanticized view of the unsung genius.

But despite the obvious signs of aging and the unelaborated state of the painting (which was not unusual for Rembrandt), the painting does not exude decrepitude or exhaustion. On the contrary, his hair, for example, is longer and fuller looking than in most of the other paintings from his last years. Moreover, Rembrandt continued to make changes and adjustments to this self portrait, still shaping and readjusting his image. This painting is thus not a self-exploration of his own decrepitude, but again a conscious shaping of Rembrandt's public image.

**Rembrandt as Painter of the Word**

Among Rembrandt's many self portraits, one is particularly striking: The *Self Portrait as Apostle Paul* (1661, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum). In portraying himself as the Apostle Paul, Rembrandt assumed for the first time the role of a well-known historical figure. Although his own features are clearly marked and recognizable, his two attributes clearly identify him as Paul: the "sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God" (Chapman 126), which also alludes to his martyrdom, and the half unrolled manuscript which he is holding. Moreover, he is

wearing not his usual white cap or a beret, but a turban, "undoubtedly an allusion to the Middle East of the Bible" (*Rembrandt* 213). But why did Rembrandt feel this affinity to the Apostle? Not only were portraits as biblical or mythological characters in vogue around the 1660s, but moreover, Paul was considered one of the most important preachers of the Christian faith in seventeenth-century Protestant circles (ibid. 214). Rembrandt thus represents himself in light of a current fashion.

However, according to a more psychological interpretation, Rembrandt was interested in "the Apostle's personal contribution as a vehicle for the Word" (Chapman 126). In this view, Rembrandt may have felt "a profound analogy to his conception of his own artistic personality" (127), since he had spent much of his career depicting biblical subjects. Thus, "[i]n identifying with Paul he could boldly, yet respectfully, claim to be an inspired yet humble vehicle for God's Word" (ibid.). Chapman further links Rembrandt's affinity with Paul to what she sees as central to Rembrandt's later self portraits, that is, his reexamination of himself and his place in the world. Having renounced his worldly pretensions of the earlier self portraits, the "self-searching nature of Paul's writing" (ibid.) was thus an apt vehicle for his new self image. Not only does this interpretation correspond to the prevailing view of Rembrandt's self-examining, inward looking stance in his self portraits, but moreover, it is central to the Rembrandt of Korda's film. At various times throughout the film, Rembrandt imparts his Biblical wisdom to large numbers of captivated listeners, and in the second half, actor Charles Laughton very much resembles this self portrait.

Rembrandt's oeuvre is full of works, mostly historical narratives, which depict a crucial moment in a dialog or a speaker in front of a captivated audience. Julius Held has noted Rembrandt's new and unusual handling of speaking situations: Unlike other painters before him, who depicted more than one person speaking in order to portray a central point in a conversation, Rembrandt shows only one person speaking while the other(s) are intensely listening.[193] Their silence is thus just as important as the words spoken; their "mute presence serves […] to sharpen the psychological effect of the action" (Held 172). For example, in the two famous paintings about *Joseph accused by Potipha's wife* (1655), one in the Berlin Gemäldegalerie, the other in the National Gallery in Washington, it is only the woman, Iempsar who speaks, accusing Joseph, who listens quietly, and whose "mute presence" underscores his innocence and his faith. But there is also one painting in which the written word plays a central role. In *Belshazzar's Feast* (c. 1635, London, National Gallery), Rembrandt shows the moment after Belshazzar has commanded that the gold and silver from his father Nebuchadnezzar be brought, and when the writing on the wall appears with a message of doom. But the painting focuses not so much on the writing itself as on the reaction of astonishment and fear and it provokes in those present. In these and other works, then, Rembrandt explores the agency of the word and the power of speech.

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[193] Julius Held, "Das gesprochene Wort bei Rembrandt," *Neue Beiträge zur Rembrandt-Forschung*, eds. Otto von Dimson und Jan Kelch (Berlin: Gebrüder Mann, 1973) 111-125. See also the works under the heading "Rembrandt als Erzähler" in the *Rembrandt*, ed. Klaus Albrecht Schröder and Marian Bisanz-Prakken (Wien: Albertina; Wolfratshausen: Edition Minerva, 2004) 220-88.

Thus, it is no surprise that such a central aspect of Rembrandt's work is translated into the screenplay and the film. Both Zuckmayer's drama and Korda's film often show "Rembrandt" as public speaker, giving long monologues during which, in the film, the camera focuses on his mesmerized audience.

## REMBRANDT'S SELF PORTRAITS IN ALEXANDER KORDA'S FILM (1936) AND CARL ZUCKMAYER'S SCREENPLAY (1936)[194]

Zuckmayer's text and Korda's film use interpretive ekphrasis of Rembrandt's self portraits to underscore their own creation of "Rembrandt" and to reveal the artist's deliberate creation of his public persona. To do so, both the text and the film make extensive use of framing, both literally and metaphorically. The film in particular has many examples of literal framing, by using door, picture, or mirror frames in which Rembrandt's "portrait" appears throughout. These frames highlight the film's use of ekphrasis because the frame identifies the scene as an imitation of a picture, that is, as ekphrasis. Metaphorically, text and film are framed by Rembrandt's self portraits, in particular the *Self Portrait as Zeuxis* from c. 1662. This self portrait appears both at the beginning and the end of Zuckmayer's screenplay, but only at the end of the film, which uses the *Self Portrait at the age of 34* as the opening of the film.

Moreover, whereas Carl Zuckmayer's screenplay only refers to Rembrandt's *Self-Portrait as Zeuxis* which begins and ends the screenplay,

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[194] *Rembrandt*, dir. Alexander Korda, perf. Charles Laughton, Gertrude Lawrence, Elsa Lanchester, and Edward Chapman, 1936, DVD, MGM Home Entertainment, 2001. Carl Zuckmayer, *Rembrandt. Ein Film*, 1936 (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag, 1980). All translations from this text are mine.

Alexander Korda alludes to all six of the above discussed self portraits, framing the film with the *Self Portrait at the Age of 34* at the beginning and with an amalgamation of the *Self Portrait at the Easel* and the *Self Portrait as Zeuxis* in the final scene, while the *Painter in his Studio* of 1629, the *Self Portrait* of 1669 in the Mauritshuis and the *Self Portrait as the Apostle Paul* are used in the middle parts of the film. However, nowhere does Korda's film represent Rembrandt's self portraits in exact tableaux; as noted earlier, he makes Charles Laughton resemble the artist in these selected self portraits and represents him in poses reminiscent of self portraits, thus inducing the viewer to look for their pictorial model. The film's choice of a sequence of self portraits and their adaptations into the cinematic discourse not only emphasizes Rembrandt's role play and self promotion, but also indicates a changing, less fixed, and rather fragmented notion of self. By contrast, Zuckmayer's frame and interpretation of the *Self Portrait as Zeuxis* portrays a more stable notion of self and a process of self-discovery and identity stabilization.

### From Screenplay to Film: *Self Portrait as Zeuxis* vs. *Self Portrait at the Age of 34*

Zuckmayer's screenplay begins with a 1936 auction in Amsterdam of what seems to be Rembrandt's *Self Portrait as Zeuxis*. Thus starting the action in Zuckmayer's own present, long after Rembrandt's death, Zuckmayer stresses the difference between the artist's reception by his contemporaries and by posterity. The picture the auctioneer gives about Rembrandt is the typical hagiography of

the great genius from humble origins ("Müllersohn"/"Miller's son," 5) who rose to glorious heights. The *Self Portrait as Zeuxis* is similarly eulogized as "nicht nur eins der größten Kunstwerke aller Zeiten [...] Ausdruck eines unvergänglichen […], eines geheiligten Lebens" ("Not only one of the greatest art works of all times [...] Expression of an everlasting […], a sanctified life," 6). This interpretive ekphrasis represents the romanticized notion of the self portrait as immortalization of the artist, and of the artist living on in his works, surpassing death through art. These eulogies also serve to underscore all the more Rembrandt's later downfall and disgrace, which is prefigured in this scene when the auctioneer mentions that Rembrandt died in "obscurity" ("Vergessenheit," 5).

However, the only descriptive ekphrasis of this self portrait does not seem to correspond what is known as the *Self Portrait as Zeuxis*. The auctioneer claims it "shows him in the prime of life, and at the height of his good fortune" ("zeigt ihn in der Vollkraft seiner Mannesjahre, auf dem Gipfel seines Glücks," 6). This description is puzzling because the *Self Portrait as Zeuxis* depicts Rembrandt as an old man, still vigorous, but far more wrinkly than in most other late self portraits.[195] Does Zuckmayer want to indicate the auctioneer's ignorance and warn the reader to take his exaggerated eulogies with a grain of salt? Or does the screenplay-writer use interpretive ekphrasis here to create his own version of the portrait for other reasons?

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[195] It is of course possible that Zuckmayer is referring to an earlier etching in which Rembrandt has also represented himself with a laughing expression. The *Self Portrait, Smilin*g (1630) depicts Rembrandt at the age of 28, however, it is not a self portrait per se, but rather part of a study of facial expressions that were "used as examples by Rembrandt himself or by his pupils and other artists" (*Rembrandt* 127).

The discrepancy between the title and the auctioneer's description of it is further enhanced by the transition of the action three-hundred years back, to the late 1630s. This transition is the only specifically cinematic device Zuckmayer has used in the whole screenplay: The camera zooms in on the self portrait, which suddenly comes "uncannily" to life when "Rembrandt's" laughter, described as vigorous, self-confident and mildly derisive ("mächtig, selbstbewußt, mit einem Unterton von leisem heiteren Spott," 6), erupts. The auction hall and the people have also been moved back into the seventeenth-century. Bidding extraordinary prices for jewelry he says he wants for Saskia, his wife, and getting into a fight with the richest man of Holland, "Rembrandt" is presented here as arrogant, prideful, wealthy, and quarrelsome. This fade-in and the animation of the picture not only emphasize its reality status, its 'true' representation of the artist, but also confirm the auctioneer's description of it as showing "Rembrandt" "in the prime of life" and in the midst of good fortune. The description and the animation, however, leave the reader puzzled because the mental image of Rembrandt's *Self Portrait as Zeuxis* and the ekphrasis of the auctioneer are incompatible. The discrepant image produced by the text is thus impossible to concretize; the text thus evokes but does not complete its ekphrastic promise. Through this mismatch between the ekphrasis and the actual painting, Zuckmayer emphasizes the disparities between self and its representation and the ability of art to falsify or misinterpret life.

Considering that the fade-in animation of Rembrandt's self portrait is the only strictly cinematic device of Zuckmayer's play, it seems curious that Korda

has not adopted it in his film. The film begins with a very different self portrait: the very first screen shows "Rembrandt" leaning over a Dutch door, reminiscent of his position in the *Self Portrait at the Age of 34*. However, the mise-en-scène makes significant changes to this painting. In the film, "Rembrandt" wears much more simple everyday clothes, has no hat, and is smoking a long pipe. Through these changes and through the context of this shot in the film sequence, the film reinterprets the picture, deleting its references to past artists and focusing instead on "Rembrandt's" social role.

After impatiently knocking on the door, "Rembrandt" enters the shop calling out loudly. During this first scene in the shop, not only does "Rembrandt" squander his money on exaggerated amounts of flowers and an overpriced necklace for his wife, which are offered to him by passing salesmen, but moreover, he is presented as blind to reality, self absorbed and so infatuated with his wife that he is oblivious to the gravity of her illness to which the doctor tries in vain to alert him. Moreover, he arrogantly refuses to accept the commission to paint the officers of the civic guard (his famous *Night Watch*) because he "[doesn't] like their faces" and prefers to paint Saskia, until his agent Jan Six makes it clear that he will have to paint them in order to pay for the high price of the necklace he just purchased for her. The *Self Portrait at the Age of 34* is thus connected to the image of "Rembrandt" as a man of high social rank, as arrogant bourgeois, as indeed Rembrandt has represented himself in other self portraits (e.g. *Self Portrait with Wide-Brimmed Hat* [1632]; *Self Portrait with Hat, Hand on Hip* [1631-2]). The movie thus amalgamates various other self portraits in this

tableau vivant of the 1640 self portrait. However, while those other self portraits could also be considered the subtext of Zuckmayer's screenplay, which represents Rembrandt similarly, the simultaneous visual interpretive ekphrasis of the *Self Portrait at the Age of 34* also hints at Korda's adaptation of Rembrandt's artistic paragone.

The first shot of "Rembrandt" is not only a tableau vivant of the 1640 self portrait, but moreover, a conscious self reference to the camera frame. The mise-en-scène begins with a brief shot of the door, whose top part opens toward the viewer, framing "Rembrandt" and thus constituting a frame within the camera frame. When "Rembrandt" then steps out of that frame into the shop room and toward the viewer, the film imitates the illusionism of the self portrait, in which the artist's leaning over a wooden wall appears as if he was leaning out of the picture frame. Through this device then, the film underscores the way in which a film can not only imitate portraiture and pictorial reality-effects, but is in fact able to surpass them. The subsequent view of "Rembrandt's" face through an empty picture frame which the artist holds up further enhances that notion. Korda thus adapts Rembrandt's emulation of old masters to his own cinematic comparison with (and desire to surpass) the visual arts.

It may seem curious then, that the film is in black and white rather than color. However, as Walker has noted, since the chiaroscuro, the deliberate use of light and darkness is central to Rembrandt, a black-and-white film is not inappropriate, and "lightning was more crucial than usual to the look of this film" (19). Moreover, Rembrandt was not only a painter, but also famous for his

etchings and drawings, which are, of course, in black and white. In fact, the initial credits sequence of Korda's film uses Rembrandt's etchings and drawings as background images. Significantly the film's title *Rembrandt* is superimposed over an etching entitled *Self Portrait, Leaning on a Stone Wall* (1639). Created a year before the self portrait discussed above in which Rembrandt leans over a (wooden?) wall, facing to the viewer's right, this etching shows Rembrandt in the same pose but facing left, and appearing overall less monumental, less imposing than in the later painting. Just as Rembrandt used this etching as a point of departure or inspiration for re-fashioning his image in the 1640 painting, so does Korda use the etching in his film to prepare the viewer both to recognize the tableau vivant in the first shot of "Rembrandt" and to look out for a filmic shaping and re-shaping of the self portrait.

This re-constructing and re-shaping of Rembrandt's self portraits will continue throughout the film in interpretive ekphrases that re-create the self portraits, sometimes amalgamating allusions to several, to fashion new meanings and to use the paintings to provide additional meanings to the film scene. Similarly, Zuckmayer's screenplay follows his pattern of employing deliberate discrepancies between ekphrasis and painting in order to emphasize his own, independent, (re-)creation of "Rembrandt" while simultaneously pointing to the way in which words can misrepresent images just as images can misrepresent life. In other words, the screenplay indicates a complex chain of illusions, raising the question of how we can know someone's true identity, and what images and

stories really tell us about a person, questions which Korda's film will take up as well.

**Saskia and *The Painter in his Studio***

A further example of Zuckmayers' deliberate use of discrepancies between the ekphrasis and the painting occurs few scenes later, after "Rembrandt's" wife Saskia's death, when "Rembrandt" is working on a last portrait of her. The attributive ekphrasis in this screenplay represents a deliberate anachronism in which the description matches a picture that historically precedes the events of the movie scene in which it appears. The scene is described as showing "Rembrandt" in front of his painting of Saskia: "Das Bild stellt Saskia von Uilenburgh dar – blühend – in reichem Gewand" (26).[196] The picture that best fits this brief attributive ekphrasis is the 1634 portrait of *Saskia* in exotic gown; a painting executed several years before her death. The painting is apparently supposed to be shown to the viewer, and since Saskia herself has never been part of any scene and has thus not been shown or described, this painting actually *is* her for the implied viewer. Thus, the screenplay never represents Saskia as an individual but exclusively as painting, and moreover, as Zuckmayer's reconstruction of her in an anachronistic ekphrasis. By choosing a much earlier painting, Zuckmayer also emphasizes "Rembrandt's" idealization of her, and his lack of a sense of reality, thus using this ekphrasis as another means of constructing a particular image of "Rembrandt" for the viewer.

[196] "The picture shows Saskia von Uilenburgh – luxuriant – in rich garments."

While Korda also does not show Saskia as a character in the film, he goes even further than Zuckmayer by not even showing her portrait. In so doing, Korda further removes Saskia from reality, transforming her into a figment of "Rembrandt's" imagination, and emphasizing "Rembrandt's" idealizing of her yet more. The film further achieves this focus on "Rembrandt" and his mental involvement, or even life, in his art through an interpretive ekphrasis of another self portrait, which takes up Zuckmayer's use of a deliberate anachronism for the purpose of constructing his filmic image of "Rembrandt": *The Painter in his Studio* (c.1629).

Although this painting was created not only long before Saskia's death, but even before their marriage, depicting a very young painter, the anachronism serves a deliberate function in this scene, shifting the focus from the revelation of Saskia's identity to the process of artistic creation and inspiration, and to the art work itself. The scene begins with a brief tableau vivant of an inverted mirror image of that self portrait. "Rembrandt" is standing several feet away from his canvas, but here he is on the viewer's right (unlike in the original picture) while the canvas looms large in the foreground on the left, dwarfing the artist himself. As Rembrandt in his picture, he is wearing shabby workman's clothes that contrast with his previous elegant attire, and overall, he looks less refined and rather disheveled. After briefly contemplating the canvas, "Rembrandt" approaches it and begins (or continues?) to paint. As in the original picture, the viewer does not know at which stage the work is, if the artist has just begun or is about to finish it, and at no time are we shown even the slightest part of the work.

However, “Rembrandt’s” words to his agent make it clear that he is painting his deceased wife wearing the necklace he had purchased in the first scene. His words thus constitute another brief attributive ekphrasis, possibly of *Saskia with a flower*, in which she is wearing a necklace, within the overall interpretive ekphrasis of the *The Painter in his Studio*.

While “Rembrandt” is working, his agent brings in a messenger from the Prince of Orange, sent to convey the majesties’ sympathies for his wife’s death. But so absorbed, so concentrated is the artist on his work that he hardly listens or notices. The interpretive ekphrasis of *The Painter in his Studio* further serves to underscore “Rembrandt’s” extreme concentration, which Charles Laughton also mimics by imitating the raised eyebrows in Rembrandt’s painting. The paragone of Rembrandt’s original self portrait, which emphasizes the artist’s intellectual work and depicts artistic creation as mental rather than manual labor, is thus transferred in the film to a cinematic paragone: Korda uses *The Painter in the Studio* for his own creation and characterization of “Rembrandt,” as well as for his focus on “Rembrandt’s” creation of both Saskia and his own public image. Moreover, unlike the painting itself, the film is able to add a before and after, showing the process of painting.

**The Late Self Portraits in Screenplay and Film**

Neither the drama nor the film has any significant ekphrases of self portraits during the middle scenes which represent “Rembrandt’s” gradual downfall and disgrace. It is only after his mistress Hendrickje’s death, when

Rembrandt has aged considerably, that further interpretive ekphrasis of self portraits occur in the film. Throughout the last sequence, Charles Laughton resembles both Rembrandt's *Self Portrait as the Apostle Paul*, and his last *Self Portrait* in the Mauritshuis. We first see "Rembrandt" out on the streets, buying a herring from a fishmonger, barely able to pay for it. He is wearing a large white turban, from which locks of grayish white hair fall out as in both of these paintings (although the turban in the Mauritshuis painting also has hues other than white), and he has a similarly wistful and contemplative expression as in these two paintings. However, while the Rembrandt of his last self portrait simply wears inconspicuous, ordinary clothes, the film emphasizes "Rembrandt's" poverty through his old, ragged coat and a camera-pan that reveals his shabby, worn-out shoes. As he eats his herring, a group of young, merry people arrives in a wagon, ready to celebrate and enjoy themselves. While he is watching and listening to these young people, who turn out to be young painters and their beautiful girlfriends, the camera focuses on "Rembrandt" twice in a close-up of his amused face and a medium shot of his torso, both times imitating poses typical of (self) portraits.

But in spite of the allusion to Rembrandt's two late self portraits with the contemplative, perhaps even self-searching look, the "Rembrandt" of this mise-en-scène is content to rejoice in others' happiness. As he tells the young man when the group addresses him, he is amused because he "see[s] a sight that warms [his] old heart." By thus using these two late self portraits to demonstrate the artist's peace with the world and merriment about the joy of others, the film goes

against the predominant romanticizing interpretations of them as documents of a self-searching mind. Moreover, “Rembrandt” responds with humor to the young people, and accepts their invitation to join them in the pub. When they toast, “Rembrandt” speaks the words of the Biblical King Solomon: “vanity of vanities, all is vanity.” Although they laugh, he continues to quote Solomon’s “words of wisdom,” finishing by emphasizing that “there is nothing better than that a man shall rejoice in his works, for that is his portion.”

This is one of the many scenes in which “Rembrandt” is shown as narrator of biblical stories or wisdom who fascinates and mesmerizes his listeners. In fact throughout both the screenplay and the film, “Rembrandt” has a greater effect on his audience through his words than through his paintings. During these scenes in the film, the camera often pans across and zooms in on the captivated faces of his listeners. Rembrandt as painter of the power of the word here becomes master of the word himself, rather than of the paintbrush. In the last instance with the young painters in the pub, moreover, it is through his speech that he is recognized by his former pupil Flinck, who was part of the merry crowd.

After returning to his studio with new paint and paintbrushes, bought with money Flink gave him, “Rembrandt” begins to work on a self portrait. Again, the work enacted is an amalgamation of two works, this time the two late self portraits in which Rembrandt has represented himself in the act of creation: the *Self Portrait at the Easel* and the *Self Portrait as Zeuxis*. When he begins to paint, the mise-en-scène shows the canvas on the right side of the screen and the artist on the left, palette and maulstick in hand, looking straight ahead at the viewer, at

the space where his mirror is probably located. When the scene jump cuts to that mirror reflection of him, "Rembrandt" repeats Solomon's words, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." His brief smile after speaking these words, alluding to the *Self Portrait as Zeuxis*, is shown only in his mirror image. Moreover, all other aspects of that work are excluded. The laughing expression is thus connected to the biblical message rather than to Rembrandt's painterly skills and ambitions.

Yet, the mise-en-scène of this interpretive ekphrasis points to a filmic irony: "Rembrandt's" Solomon quotation appears as if spoken by his mirror image, so that the mirror as traditional symbol of vanity is here used as site of the subject's realization that all worldly pleasures are meaningless and empty. Moreover, this realization must also extend to painting and self-portraiture, which thus becomes not a mean of self-knowledge but an expression of vanity and self-importance. The film, then, ends by questioning the function of self portraiture as means of self-knowledge and self-fulfillment. As the last view is only of "Rembrandt's" mirror image, which functions like a frame within the camera frame, the film underscores not the search for or analysis of the self, but the gap between self and its representation. Moreover, the device of the frame within the frame takes the viewer back to the very first shot of "Rembrandt" in the pose of his 1640 self portrait and its display of pride, arrogance, and material wealth. Thus reinterpreting both these late self-portraits in the light of the earlier one, the film does not show a development towards self-knowledge in the self portraits, but points to the split between self and its image.[197]

[197] This does not mean that Korda is here anticipating later art historical interpretations of the self portraits as self promotion, but only that his use of the late self portraits indicates a slight departure from the traditional and then prevailing interpretation of them.

The last scene in Zuckmayer's screenplay also depicts the creation of the *Self Portrait as Zeuxis.* However, the screenplay closes rather differently than the film. Here, "Rembrandt" does not end in the company of the thriving young painters, but in his attic in the company of the drunkard Frans Hals, a former painter who has renounced his art and lives in a poor-house. Before they toast, "Rembrandt" begins to quote Solomon's wisdom, but Hals reinterprets the final words, "that there is nothing better than that a man shall rejoice in his works," toasting not to work but to "die Fröhlichkeit" (joy/happiness) and "das Lachen" (laughter). "Rembrandt" joins the toast, echoing "Das Lachen – am Anfang und am Ende" ("Laughter – at the beginning and at the end," 115).

Does Zuckmayer refer to the 1630 etching of Rembrandt with a laughing expression, the *Self Portrait, Smiling* ("am Anfang") and the later *Self Portrait as Zeuxis* ("am Ende")? In that case, this allusion also refers us back to the beginning of the screenplay, thus indicating the framing of the text by two different works. However, this reinterpretation of the first scene as an ekphrasis of the early etching still does not resolve the discrepancies of the original ekphrasis, because this etching matches the auctioneer's description even less than the later painting. In other words, the frame provided by the *Self Portrait as Zeuxis* does not provide closure to the text but rather emphasizes the disparities between the textual ekphrases and the actual art works. The frame thus exposes the multiple gaps between the screenplay's self portraits of "Rembrandt," Rembrandt's own projection of his identity in his self portraits, and his historical self.

However, Zuckmayer's interpretation of the Cologne self portrait is again ambiguous and allows for different concretizations. The above allusion to this portrait and its connection to the Solomon quotation suggests a possible concretization of it as *Self Portrait as laughing Democritus.* However, this self portrait is subsequently both enacted and physically shown, unconnected to Solomon's wisdom, and in fact, in silence, making possible an interpretation of this self portrait as Rembrandt painting and laughing in the face of Terminus, the God of Death.

After Hals has left "Rembrandt" (who generously gave him one *gulden* for another drink), the artist returns to his canvas, where, "shadowy, as if from a stained mirror, his own laughing face looks at him" (116).[198] Unlike in the film, in which the viewer only sees "Rembrandt's" mirror image, a possible concretization of the screenplay would allow the audience to see the painted self on the canvas. The use of the simile, moreover, likening the self portrait to a mirror, emphasizes the extent to which art and life mirror each other, that is, the extent to which "Rembrandt" has become a work of art, has constructed his identity through art. Furthermore, the last image of the screenplay to be concretized is of "Rembrandt's" hand with a paintbrush, continuing to shape his self. His hand is lit, but this light seems to come from the creating hand itself. Then the light diminishes, and the very last image is a sunset over the roofs, symbolizing the artist's death. Zuckmayer's ending thus enacts the way in which "Rembrandt," laughing in the face of death, continues to construct and reshape his

[198] "Wie aus einem behauchten Spiegel blickt ihm schattenhaft sein eigenes lachendes Gesicht entgegen" (116).

public image in this self portrait. But whereas the preceding interpretation of this image was based on the connection of the self portrait to language (the Solomon quotation), this interpretive ekphrasis is presented entirely in images which contradict or modify the previous one. In a concretization of Zuckmayer's screenplay, then, the verbal ekphrasis competes with the visual one, which has the last word, so to speak, and moreover also serves to expose "Rembrandt's" agenda of public identity construction though his self portraits. At the end of the screenplay, then, the visual thus not only subverts the verbal ekphrasis, but also becomes independent of its creator.

As throughout the realization of the screenplay, Korda takes up Zuckmayer's cues but intensifies them. By setting the visual and the verbal against each other simultaneously, the film enacts a more direct, immediate confrontation between the two, thereby heightening the tension. Similar to Zuckmayer, Korda's film interprets the Cologne self portrait as *Self Portrait as laughing Democritus* by implying a connection between Democritus and Solomon. Like Democritus' teachings, the Solomon lines that "Rembrandt" quotes in the text and film emphasize the need for peace with oneself and the world, for finding happiness and serenity in oneself rather than external, material goods. But unlike Zuckmayer, Korda uses the Solomon quotation, spoken by "Rembrandt's" mirror image as he paints himself, like a verbalization of the self portrait interpreted as *Self Portrait as Laughing Democritus*. In other words, "Rembrandt's" words while painting himself, constitute a verbal ekphrasis of that process of painting which we see in the mirror. However, this visual mise-en-

scène is constituted by the above-mentioned filmic irony of using this traditional image of vanity as site of verbal renunciation of worldly vanities. Thus, by translating the self portrait into language through the Solomon quote while at the same time visually representing Rembrandt's mirror image which questions and subverts the verbal statement, Korda's film re-enacts the competition and antagonism inherent in traditional ekphrasis within its own cinematic medium. In short, Korda's film on the one hand uses ekphrasis to demystify the function of art to create and possibly falsify life, but on the other, he uses visual language to expose the traditional hierarchy of word over image in ekphrasis, thus setting verbal and visual language against each other.

## CONCLUSION

The screenplay and the film's treatment of Rembrandt's self portraits foreshadow later art historical interpretations of them as deliberate means of public identity construction at a time when more traditional interpretations of self portraits as medium of self knowledge and self exploration were predominant. But the use of ekphrasis in Zuckmayer and Korda exposes not only Rembrandt's own creation of his public identity, but also the writer's and filmmaker's tools for creating their own "Rembrandt." Moreover, Korda takes up and intensifies the cues from Zuckmayer's screenplay with regard to the ability of art to reinterpret life and to construct and redesign the artist's identity through images. Film has the unique means of bringing the historical artist, his self portraits, the "self portrait" created in the film, as well as the art historical interpretations of the real self

portraits into conflict by exploiting film's potential for visual identity construction. Film is able to create mise-en-scenes reminiscent of self portraits, which the viewer is expected to take as true images of the artist, thus drawing on a tradition of pictorial illusionism hailed as art's power and superiority over the verbal arts. For example Leon Battista Alberti in his tract on painting (*Della Pittura*, 1435) stated that "painting contains a divine force which not only makes absent men present, as friendship is said to do, but moreover makes the dead seem almost alive."[199] Both the painter himself and the filmmaker, then, exploit the status of realistic images as faithful, objective representations of a stable identity, rather than subjective interpretations of a changing subject. However, Korda's film also goes further than the screenplay in underscoring the fragmentary notion of artistic identity by using ekphrasis of two or even three self portraits simultaneously. By merging the self portraits in the film's ekphrases, Korda acknowledges that no one image can faithfully render an identity, that personal identity is not as stable as a pictorial representation. Moreover, in so doing, the film also underscores its ability to go beyond pictorial illusionism by creating portraits that not only seem as if they were alive, but that are actually moving and speaking. The film thus does not participate in the traditional paragone between verbal and visual arts by taking side with the visual, but on the contrary, enters the competition by setting verbal and visual arts against each other.

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[199] Leon Battista Alberti, *On Painting*, trans. by John R Spencer (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1966) 63.

The use of the spoken word in this film further underscores this competition between word and image. While the film and the screenplay throughout seem to value the verbal over the visual, representing Rembrandt as effective public speaker with mesmerizing impact upon his audience, his art works are hardly shown or described. In this regard, the film seems to give precedence to the verbal over the visual. However, the visual ekphrases of Rembrandt's self portraits challenge this interpretation just like the visual ekphrasis of the *Self portrait as Zeuxis* challenges and subverts its verbalization by "Rembrandt" through the Solomon quotes. Throughout the film, then Korda sets verbal and visual elements against each other, using ekphrasis to emphasize its own status as hybrid, collaborative medium, as neither purely visual nor verbal, nor a mixture of the two, but as independent art form in its own right.

# Chapter 6: Vermeer's Women in Film and Fiction: Ekphrasis and Gendered Structures of Vision

## INTRODUCTION

Both the United States and Europe have witnessed a literal Vermeer craze in recent film and fiction. To mention some of the most notable, Jon Jost's film *All the Vermeers in New York* (1991), the novels by John Bayley, *Girl in the Red Hat* (1998), Susan Vreeland's *Girl in Hyacinth Blue* (1999), Tracy Chevalier's *Girl with a Pearl Earring* (1999), Catherine Weber's *The Music Lesson* (2002), and Luigi Guarnieri's *La doppia vita di Vermeer* (2004), as well as the poetry collections by Marylin Chandler McEntrye, *In Quiet Life* (2000) and Carlos Pujol's *La pared amarilla* (2002), all deal with Vermeer paintings.

Perhaps one of the reasons why this seventeenth-century Dutch artist fascinates so many people is because so little is known about his life and so few of his works exist, leaving ample room for fictional speculation.[200] Moreover, Vermeer often depicts his subjects – mostly women – in a moment of quietness or intimacy, so that the viewer is at once drawn in and kept out of their privacy. Critics have often remarked upon the silence and mystery surrounding Vermeer's canvases. Yet, these silences, as Brian J. Wolf has proposed, can be seen as an expression of the socio-cultural identity of the Dutch upper bourgeoisie, who

[200] According to John Nash, "of the twenty-nine works documented in Vermeer's lifetime, twenty-two appear to survive today, seven seem to be lost. Eight further, undocumented works are today universally accepted as genuine. […] Currently there is consensus among Vermeer scholars on not more than thirty-one works. Of these, seven have chequered histories." See John Nash, *Vermeer* (London: Scala Books; Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 1991), 26. Other scholars set the number at thirty-five or thirty-six works. The two paintings whose authenticity is the most disputed are *Girl with a Flute* and *Girl with a Red Hat.*

"turned to privacy and inwardness as signs of leisure that distinguished it from other social groups."[201] Vermeer's paintings, then, represent a vision of that social class "whose rich inner life was expressed through metaphors of silence" (ibid).

However, for Wolf, Vermeer's portraits of women alone in a room lead away from the issue of class and "point us instead to the notion of art itself" (168). Vermeer's women are "a world apart, inviolate, self-contained, […] self-possessed,"[202] thus representing a parallel to Vermeer's view of art. Moreover, many of his women depicted by themselves in a room are occupied in aesthetic or artistic tasks: writing or reading a letter (e.g. *Young Woman Reading a Letter at an Open Window*, ca. 1657; *A Lady Writing*, ca. 1665), making music (e.g. *Woman Tuning a Lute*, ca. 1664; *Young Woman Standing at a Virginal,* ca. 1672-73; *Young Woman Seated at a Virginal*, ca. 1675), or embroidering (*The Lacemaker*, ca. 1669-70). Perhaps this connection of feminine privacy and autonomy with the aesthetic may be one reason why so many female writers are drawn to Vermeer's works. Woman writers such as Tracy Chevalier and Susan Vreeland have used Vermeer's paintings in their novels to depict processes of female self-realization and self-sufficiency.

Tracy Chevalier's *Girl with a Pearl Earring* invents the story of the girl in that famous painting of ca. 1665-66.[203] That is, her novel gives voice to this silent, mysterious girl and lets her tell the story of her life as a maid in the Vermeer

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[201] Brian J. Wolf, *Vermeer and the Invention of Seeing* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2001) 158.
[202] Svetlana Alpers, *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983) 224.
[203] Tracy Chevalier, *Girl with a Pearl Earring* (London and New York: Penguin, 1999).

household, where eventually she becomes the model for that painting. The novel, told in the first person, centers on the servant girl Griet's private thoughts and domestic troubles, and moments of descriptive and interpretive ekphrasis in the novel generally occur in intimate, private moments. Susan Vreeland's *Girl in Hyacinth Blue* deals with an imagined Vermeer.[204] A math teacher claims to own an unknown Vermeer, and in order to substantiate his claim for its authenticity, the novel traces the painting from the present day to its conception in the 1670s in seven separate stories connected only by the painting. As a whole, the novel focuses on the history and pedigree of the painting (and the girl in the painting) vis-à-vis its role in the life of its predominantly female owners.

Both these novels have been filmed recently (2003), and both films have made significant changes to the story, which shift the emphasis to a socio-political dimension that is subtler in the novels. Moreover, in both films ekphrasis becomes a tool to demonstrate male power rather than female self-realization. Peter Webber's film *Girl with a Pearl Earring* condenses and deletes scenes and changes the function and setting of the paintings, the point of view and types of the ekphrases, as well as the relationship between Vermeer (Colin Firth) and the maid Griet (Scarlett Johansson).[205] Through these alterations, the film shifts its focus from a young girl's evolving consciousness to the class and power relations in the story. Here ekphrasis functions either as precarious bridge or as clash

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[204] Susan Vreeland, *Girl in Hyacinth Blue* (Denver: MacMurray & Beck, 1999).

[205] *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, dir. Peter Webber, perf. Colin Firth, Scarlett Johansson, and Tom Wilkinson, DVD, Lions Gate Home Entertainment, 2003.

between social classes and as the collision between male and female gazes anchored in their different social identities.

Similarly, as the change of the title suggests, Brent Shield's film *Brush with Fate* (2003) emphasizes the "fateful" identity of the painting and its socio-political dimension by changing the chronology of the scenes and by providing a frame narrative.[206] Thus, the Nazi father of the present owner Cornelia, rather than she herself, becomes the author of the main ekphrastic description of the painting. Moreover, the frame story sets Richard's male voice of reason (Thomas Gibson) against Cornelia's female emotionality (played by Glenn Close). In short, in both films, the women's role is changed from seeing subject to objects of the male gaze and logos, thereby also reducing or questioning their ekphrastic agency.[207]

In these novels and films, then, ekphrasis is tied, in very different ways, to issues of gender and class. Whereas in the two novels, interpretive ekphrases by the female protagonists predominate, the majority of the ekphrases in the films are depictive and from a male perspective. By changing the type and perspective of ekphrasis, the filmmakers revert back to the male-oriented tradition of ekphrasis which the female authors have successfully sought to challenge and correct in their novels. However, both the novels and the films are in fact focusing on and

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[206] *Brush with Fate*, dir. Brent Shields, perf. Glenn Close, Thomas Gibson, and Ellen Burstyn, DVD, Hallmark Hall of Fame, 2003.

[207] Feminist film critics such as Laura Mulvey and Mary Ann Doane have shown how film has denied the female spectator the ability to identify with the screen image as it "has historically articulated its stories through a conflation of its central axis of seeing/being seen with the opposition male/female." See Mary Ann Doane, *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis*. (New York and London: Routledge, 1991), 165. See also Laura Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures* (Bloomington : Indiana University Press, 1989).

transmedializing one selective aspect of Vermeer's oeuvre. The novels reproduce the privacy and inwardness of Vermeer's canvases through the intimate rapport between the paintings and the protagonists in order to show these women's expression of personal identity through that relationship. The films, on the other hand, underscore the subtle hints of social power and socio-cultural identity construction in Vermeer's paintings.

## VERMEER'S WOMEN: CONSTRUCTING PRIVATE, AESTHETIC, AND SOCIO-CULTURAL IDENTITIES

Twenty-seven out of a total of no more than thirty-five or thirty-six works in Vermeer's oeuvre are paintings representing women alone or in company, and of these, seventeen (almost half of the total oeuvre) show women by themselves, engaged in a private, often aesthetic task. Many of them are either reading or writing a letter, activities which Wolf has linked to "bourgeois notions of privacy, property, and inner life" (18). These paintings, then, underscore the women's self-enclosure and inwardness in moments of quiet, private self-reflection. Martin Pops has aptly described these personal spaces of self-consciousness in enclosed rooms with the metaphor of the "chamber of being."[208]

On the other hand, however, letter writing and reading are also instances of communication with the outer world, minimal intrusions of the public into the private sphere.[209] Moreover, as Wolf has shown, it is precisely the silences and

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[208] Martin Pops, *Vermeer: Consciousness and the Chamber of Being* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1984).

[209] In his essay on "The Public and the Private in the Age of Vermeer" in an eponymous catalog, Arthur K. Wheelock discusses letters in Dutch seventeenth-century art as link between the private and the public world, which often points to the tensions between individual concerns and

the production of privacy that constitute clues to the political character of these paintings (157). While underscoring solitude and inner life, these paintings also point to issues of class and gender.

Three paintings with the theme of letter writing or reading especially underscore the issue of social class by representing a lady writing or receiving a letter, and a maid standing next to or behind her: *Mistress and Maid* (c. 1667-68), *The Love Letter* (c. 1670-72), and *Lady Writing a Letter with her Maid* (c. 1670-72). The presence of the maids in these works points to the women's different social spaces, but also to female complicity.

The earliest of the three, the *Mistress and Maid* is the one that most emphasizes the women's complicity when the maid functions as envoy of a letter the lady has received. It is still in the servant's hands as she brings it to her mistress who is sitting at a table with her writing utensils in front of her, apparently already in the process of or about to write a letter herself. Here, the composition of the work stresses the symmetry and harmony between the two women in a room without men, who look each other in the eye, both with their hands on a piece of paper.

In the two later works, however, and especially in the *Love Letter*, the tensions between class boundaries and gender alliances are stronger. The *Love Letter* presents the viewer a glimpse through an open door into a hall where the maid has just interrupted her mistress' guitar play to give her a letter, a love letter as the title indicates. But the composition here makes it clear that the maid too has

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communal ones (see Arthur K. Wheelock, Jr., ed. *The Public and the Private in the Age of Vermeer* [London: Philip Wilson Publishers, 2000] 19).

interrupted her labor of cleaning. The foreground shows a broom and two sturdy servant shoes, and next to the maid stands a full laundry basket. Divided by their occupation (playing music vs. cleaning), they are nevertheless joint by the complicity and mutual understanding that the sending and receiving of love letters requires. However, in contrast to the earlier painting, this one does not so much foreground the complicity of gender, but more the separation of the classes. In spite of the seeming harmony, then, the tension between the two social spheres is strongly present.

It is in three pictures from the mid-1660s of women alone in their rooms that class issues are superseded by what Wolf has called "meditations on the 'aesthetic'" (168). Wolf reads *Woman with a Pearl Necklace* (ca. 1664)*, Woman in Blue reading a Letter* (ca. 1663-4) and *Woman Holding a Balance* (ca. 1664) as self-reflexive, self-referential images not only *of* but *about* self-containment, self-repose, and self-sufficiency, drawing together the notion of privacy and the aesthetic (167-68). In these images, the subjects' self-absorption and self-possession functions as a parallel to painting itself.

In *Woman with a Pearl Necklace*, for example, the presence of the mirror underscores the thematic of reflection and self reflection. Moreover, the mirror transforms the Renaissance profile portrait, in the tradition of which this work participates, into an instance of intense self-reflection, endowing the woman with "a sense of presence and self-sufficiency that contradicts the passivity of Renaissance profile conventions" (Wolf 180). Vermeer thus empowers his female subject, converting the passive, observed object of the (traditionally mostly male)

viewer's gaze into actively seeing, self-reflective, autonomous subject who furthermore is able to protect her own space and identity as the viewer is kept out of her interaction with the mirror reflection.

### *The Girl with a Pearl Earring*

Vermeer's *Girl with a Pearl Earring* combines these three issues, that is, the tension between public and private, the issue of social class, and a statement on aesthetics. This work has generally been placed in the tradition of the "*tronie*," that is, as a type of painting that shows the head and shoulders of a fictional character, often in head-dress and costume, rather than a portrait of a specific person (Nash 25). The notion of the *tronie* points to the lack of class markers in this image due to the exotic turban and the black background that gives no trace of her socio-cultural position, so that the girl "combines the role of maid and model to startling effect" (Wolf 138).

But the painting includes other contradictions as well. While Edward Snow focuses on the erotic tension between privacy and accessibility, loss and transgression, pain and wholeness,[210] Wolf emphasizes a compositional tension "between body posture (parallel to the picture plane) and regard-to-the-viewer (perpendicular to the picture plane)" (138). This striking frontal turn of the girl's head and her direct gaze at the viewer, both running against the lateral position of her body, he avers, can be interpreted as Vermeer's statement on the nature of

[210] Edward Snow, *A Study of Vermeer* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 1-22.

perception thus defined as "an activity that cuts against the grain; it proceeds not in consonance with the body's activities but in contradiction to them" (139).

An image of and about looking, then, this painting becomes self-reflexive, thematizing spectatorship and the viewer's gaze. In returning the viewer's look, the girl in the painting unsettles the hierarchy of seeing/seen and subject/object, uncannily becoming the seeing subject and transforming the viewer into the observed. Moreover, the painting's ambiguous status as seemingly a portrait, yet not really one, situates it within the portrait tradition by emphasizing its defiance against it. In the traditional Renaissance profile portrait, the woman is seen from the side, passively looking into emptiness, representing an object of exchange or material wealth. This tradition of "gendered and possessive seeing" (179) is countered in *The Girl with a Pearl Earring* by the active turn of the girl's head and eyes toward the viewer, affirming the female gaze and her power to break that male tradition of looking at and objectifying women.[211]

Tracy Chevalier's novel in which the girl of this painting herself talks not only about the creation of that work, but also about other art works, further underscores that challenge to a male-dominated tradition by making the girl an actively looking and speaking subject through the use of ekphrasis. The film, on the other hand, focuses on the issues of social class in Vermeer's work by foregrounding the relationships between servants and masters and the social power structures of seventeenth century Holland.

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[211] Wolf interprets *Woman with a Pearl Necklace*, rather than *The Girl with a Pearl Earring* in the tradition of the Renaissance profile portrait (178-79). However, I believe that this context applies at least partly also to *The Girl with a Pearl Earring*.

## TRACY CHEVALIER AND PETER WEBBER: *GIRL WITH A PEARL EARRING*

A virtually unavoidable change made in film adaptations of novels is the condensation or deletion of scenes. Peter Webber's film coalesces into a single scene two separate, relatively secondary episodes of the novel: the birth celebration of Vermeer's eleventh child and the viewing of *Woman with a Pearl Necklace* by his patron Van Ruijven. The film merges these episodes into a pivotal scene that not only foregrounds class and power relations in Vermeer's world, but also changes the point of view from which the painting is interpreted. Moreover, the film cuts one and significantly modifies two of Griet's previous three ekphrases of that painting that occur in the novel.[212]

In Chevalier's narrative, Griet's first view of *Woman With a Pearl Necklace* (ca. 1664) occurs when she is cleaning up in Vermeer's atelier for the first time. Contemplating the painting, Griet begins to reflect on its meaning for herself, ending in the desire to identify with the subject of the painting and to enter the world of its creator: "I wanted to wear the mantle and the pearls. I wanted to know the man who painted her like that" (36). Moreover, she muses

[212] There have so far been only two longer studies of Chevalier's Girl with a Pearl Earring., neither of which compares it to the film adaptation. Deborah H. Cibelli in "'Girl with a Pearl Earring': Painting, Reality, Fiction," *Journal of Popular Culture* 37.4 (2004): 583-92, compares Chevalier's treatment of the painting and Vermeer to art historical accounts, and seems to be mostly interested in clarifying what is "reality" and what is "fiction" in this novel. Martina Wagner-Egelhaaf, "Ein anderes Zeichen," *Dinge: Medien der Aneignung, Grenzen der Verfügung*, eds. Gisela Ecker, Claudia Breger, and Susanne Scholz (Königstein/Taunus: Helmer, 2002) 87-90, emphasizes Griet's process of emancipation and her resistance to fulfill the roles accorded to her by the men in her life. She does not, however, connect this interpretation to the original painting nor to Griet's ekphrases of other works, which I believe is significant for understanding not only the full extent of her emancipation, but moreover, the importance of the changes in the film, which undo her agency and emancipation.

about the relationship between painted objects and reality, revealing her aesthetic sensibilities and her keen observation:

> It was odd to look at it [i.e. the painting] with the setting just behind it. Already from my dusting I knew all the objects on the table, and their relation to one another – the letter by the corner, the powder-brush lying casually next to the pewter bowl, the blue cloth bunched around the dark pot. Everything seemed to be exactly the same, except cleaner and purer. It made a mockery of my own cleaning. Then I saw a difference. I drew in my breath. "What is it, girl?" "In the painting there are no lion heads on the chair next to the woman," I said (36).

Griet begins here with a depictive ekphrasis, enumerating the objects in the painting. At the end of this passage, however, her ekphrasis becomes interpretive when she reflects on the differences between painting and reality: the greater purity of the painting and the conscious choice of the painter to leave out certain elements. In this interpretive ekphrasis Griet's experience of the painting is at once personalized, related to her own work, and aesthetic, inquiring about the status of the painted reality. Moreover, this is a moment of shared admiration between her and Vermeer's mother-in-law, Maria Thins, who has entered the room and stands quietly with Griet contemplating the painting and responding to her surprise about the differences between the painting and the setting: "There was once a lute sitting on that chair as well. He makes plenty of changes. He doesn't paint just what he sees, but what will suit. […]" (36). Even though Maria Thins eventually reminds her of her duties as maid, the narrative emphasizes their common aesthetic experience in juxtaposing Griet's continued attempt to understand the painting ("It was like looking at a star in the night sky," 37) and Maria Thins' quiet contemplation of it as the girl leaves. In other words, the class

differences between the two women, though present, are diminished in favor of an emphasis on the bonding aesthetic experience of Vermeer's work. The way in which this scene sets class boundaries into conflict with an alliance between these women echoes Vermeer's strategy in his paintings of maids and mistresses that I have discussed above, such as the *Love Letter* or *Mistress and Maid*. Here, however, the women's alliance is even more equal, since it is not based on the love affair of the mistress, but on a joint love and admiration of Vermeer's art.

Peter Webber's film, by contrast, underscores the tension in the class relations by rendering the presence of Maria Thins disruptive of Griet's aesthetic experience, rather than sharing it. Moreover, the film foregrounds Griet's status as maid by focusing on her cleaning instead of her contemplations and thoughts, and by ending the sequence with a jump cut to a shot of a butcher's table with cut-off, blood-dripping pig's heads, an image that functions to stress the disparity between Griet's harsh reality and the world of sublime artistic beauty. The film does indicate Griet's personal connection to the work of art through jump cuts between her viewing the painting and the painting itself and through a camera angle that suggests identification between the viewer's perspective of the painting and Griet's point of view. Yet the focus of the scene and its ultimate resolution is on the way Maria Thins' demands disrupt Griet's contemplation of the painting. Not only is Maria Thins presented as impatient ("Well, get along girl. You're not paid to stand gawping all day"), but also unresponsive to the painting. Vermeer's mother-in-law is clearly not "content to stand with [Griet] and contemplate the painting" (37), as she is in the novel. Furthermore, the film relinquishes not only

Griet's verbal (though unuttered) ekphrasis (her interior monologue about the painting), but also the two women's subsequent discussion about the painting in the novel's dialog, and their aesthetic connection through the work.

In the novel, Griet describes *Woman with a Pearl Necklace* on two other occasions. Soon after she has seen it for the first time, she explains it to her now blind father, who deeply admires Vermeer. This exchange necessitates that she forego external description in favor of an interpretive simile of the feeling the painted light evokes. Only then can Griet's ekphrasis achieve *enargeia*, the aesthetic skill of making the listener see the image in his mind's eyes: "My father listened intently, but his own face was not illuminated until I said, 'The light on the back wall is so warm that looking at it feels the way the sun feels on your face'" (47). Again, this scene underscores not only Griet's artistic sensibilities but also the importance of private intimacy in the reflection on art. Because the film reduces her family's role, it has no equivalent for this scene. Griet's parents appear only once, when they meet their daughter's future husband after church. By thus limiting their role to this one social encounter, the film relinquishes the function of the family as intimate recipient of Griet's personally shared encounter with Vermeer's art in favor of the film's overall emphasis on class-bound social relationships.

Similarly, in the novel, Griet's third ekphrasis of *Woman With a Pearl Necklace* underscores the importance of private artistic contemplation while the film foregrounds the relationship and nascent intimacy between the maid and the artist. In both the novel and the film, this scene represents the first encounter

between the two since Griet has started to work for the Vermeer family. Likewise, in both Griet does not see the painting directly, but observes it through the camera obscura to which Vermeer introduces her.[213] However, in the novel it is only after Griet has asked her master to leave her alone with the image that she is able to fully and extensively reflect on what she sees in the camera obscura and on the effect of that device:

> As I brought the robe over my head the image, as he called it, became clearer and clearer – the table, the chairs, the yellow curtain in the corner, the back wall with the map handing on it, the ceramic pot gleaming on the table, the pewter basin, the powder-brush, the letter. They were all there, assembled before my eyes on a flat surface, a painting that was not a painting. I cautiously touched the glass – it was smooth and cold, with no traces of paint on it. I removed the robe and the image went faint again, though it was still there. I put the robe over me once more, closing out the light, and watched the jeweled colors appear again. They seemed to be even brighter and more colorful on the glass than they were in the corner (59).

As previously, Griet passes here from a depictive ekphrasis in the first sentence, in which she names the items in the picture in the order she perceives them, to an interpretive ekphrasis in the rest of this passage, in which her reflections about what she sees become increasingly abstract. Here, however, the interpretive ekphrasis with Griet's thoughts about formal and technical issues has markedly increased. Not only does Griet reflect on the effect of light and darkness

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[213] Although scholars have sometimes disputed the possibility that Vermeer might have used the camera obscura, most scholars seem to agree that he did indeed use it. For a very convincing and detailed argumentation see Philip Steadman, *Vermeer's Camera: Uncovering the Truth Behind the Masterpieces* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001). Steadman explains the camera obscura itself (4-24), musters ample proof for its use by Vermeer (25-134), and discusses its influence on Vermeer's style (156-66). See also Wolf (23-46) for the role of the camera obscura in the "language and rhetorical machinery of seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe" (32). Wolf discusses its use as a trope, as designating the "interiority of newly privatized individuals" while at the same time providing a "picture of how the process of looking itself occurred, revealing how one sees." (32)

on the image and its colors, but also on the materiality of the medium ("flat surface"; "smooth and cold") and, most importantly, on pictorial illusionism and the complex illusion produced by the mechanical device. The image she contemplates is twice removed from reality; it is a painted image reflected in mechanical device ("a painting that was not a painting"); in other words, it is a mechanical illusion of a pictorial illusion. Significantly, however, Griet needs the security of undisturbed privacy in order to achieve a notion of these aesthetic, pictorial complexities.

By contrast, this scene in the film focuses on the incipient proximity between her and Vermeer rather than on the young woman's aesthetic reflections. Instead of sending Vermeer out while observing the image, they share the intimacy of the darkness under the robe, contemplating the image together. Moreover, the painter's words, his explanation of the camera obscura, dominate the discourse, thus silencing the girl's own ekphrastic thoughts about the image of the picture she sees.

Similarly, another scene highlights the film's shift from an aesthetic to a more erotic relationship. In the novel, when Vermeer is working on *A Lady Writing* (ca. 1665), Griet aids him in the completion of the picture by making a minimal yet significant modification to the setting on the table. Finding the scene "too neat," she decides to alter it by pulling "the front part of the blue cloth onto the table so that it flowed out of the dark shadows under the table and up in a slant onto the table in front of the jewelry box" (133). When Vermeer asks her why she changed the tablecloth, she tells him, "[t]here needs to be some disorder in the

scene, to contrast with her tranquility. Something to tease the eye. And yet it must be something pleasing to the eye as well, and it is, because the cloth and her arm are in a similar position" (135-6). Thus the novel shows a young woman beginning to think like an artist about structural composition. Her interpretive ekphrasis here again goes a step further since she not only reflects on the formal qualities of the work, but moreover, her interpretation is able to guide her own creative impulse that leads her to a conscious, deliberate action. Furthermore, this ekphrasis demonstrates Griet's increasing self-confidence as a result of her self-reflective contact with art. Whereas before she did not want to share her aesthetic experiences with Vermeer, she now has no scruples explaining her aesthetic deliberations to the painter.

The film changes not only the picture she helps him with by using a different one, but also her reason for the change. Here, it is *Woman with a Water Jug* (ca. 1664-65) in which Griet makes a much more noticeable alteration, removing a chair that stands in front of the model. And here, her explanation of that change is of a psychological rather than aesthetic nature, stating that the girl in the picture "looked trapped." While this is also an interpretive rather than a depictive ekphrasis, it is related to the painting's content rather than its formal, aesthetic qualities, and is a more personal, instinctive response rather than the result of a conscious thought process. With her answer Griet may well be projecting her own feelings about her place in the Vermeer household and her relationship with the painter. Though attracted to his world of art, she is nonetheless conscious of the impermeable barriers imposed by her own status and

social propriety. Thus, Griet in the film does not demonstrate the same growth of self-assurance and self-possession as in the novel; an absence which parallels her lack of aesthetic growth.

Such connections between Griet's response to art and reflections about social status and propriety are reinforced by the film's emphasis on class structure. The clash of classes is also the main focus of the central scene in the film, the banquet celebration that condenses the birth of Vermeer's eleventh child and the presentation of the painting *Woman with a Pearl Necklace* to Vermeer's patron Van Ruijven. Significantly, these merged events are two separate and less prominent events in the novel. Moreover, the novel has no ekphrases of the painting by Van Ruijven when he first views his new possession, an episode in which Griet is only fleetingly present when she brings in the wine (72). That is, the novel underscores the absence of ekphrasis in an episode in which the female thoughts are silenced and the female gaze thwarted ("I had not had a chance to look at it one last time," 73), thereby indicating the vulnerable status of female ekphrasis.

The film, by contrast, uses the discussion around *Woman with a Pearl Necklace* to foreground the social and economic dominance of Van Ruijven both in terms of gender and class. He marks his chauvinistic superiority by his jovial ridicule of the painting ("you have glazed my wife in dried piss"), as well as its female subject ("it is almost as if she were thinking"). When he finally does praise the painting ("Color and perspective is true, the illusion – is perfect"), the relief of the others further stresses the power of his words. Likewise, he underscores

Vermeer's economic dependence on his patronage by indicating that he has taken on a new protégé and by emphasizing his own wealth ("Is there another patron in Delft with pockets as deep as mine?"). He further compounds his superiority by asking Vermeer depreciatively if he has already decided "what to daub next."

In short, by focusing its function as link or barrier between social classes and genders, the film presents an ekphrasis of art enmeshed in the public sphere. Significantly, by focusing on private, intimate moments of ekphrasis, the novel minimizes the social implications of Vermeer's paintings. In fact, Chevalier's novel is built around a double ekphrasis: first, the whole book gives voice to the silent image/woman in the picture *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, and second, a combination of several descriptions of and reflections on other paintings within the story occur, all from that girl's perspective. In this novel, then, the historically male-dominated field of ekphrasis becomes a space of female thoughts, and of her private retreat from social dictates.

In the film, ekphrasis and paintings play a different role. Here, the depiction of paintings does not mark a relationship between an individual and a work of art, as the ekphrastic discourse of the novel does, but rather an integration of art works into a social setting. Thus, the images are seen and commented on by people other than Griet, particularly by Vermeer's libidinous patron van Ruijven (*Woman with a Pearl Necklace* and Griet's "portrait"), whose evident goal is to possess both the women and their images. At the same time, paintings also serve to bridge the gap between social classes, which the film further emphasizes through frequent shots of Vermeer's refined painters' hands and Griet's work-

roughened hands together. Their hands symbolize both their different social spheres in which they work, and their mutual understanding. In brief, the paintings in the film serve to underscore the different social and economic relations between servants and masters, patron and painter.

### SUSAN VREELAND'S *GIRL IN HYACINTH BLUE* AND BRENT SHIELD'S *BRUSH WITH FATE*

Similar changes to those observed in the novel and film *Girl with a Pearl Earring* can be found in comparing Susan Vreeland's *Girl in Hyacinth Blue* and Brent Shield's film adaptation. The main structural changes from Vreeland's novel to Shield's film involve modifying the narrative situation and changing the chronology of the story. As a result, instead of the novel's emphasis on a personal-aesthetic role of art, the film's use of the fictitious Vermeer painting (created for the film by Jonathan Jonson) lends the work a socio-political function. Thus, the content focus of film and novel change as well. Whereas the novel is primarily interested in tracing the genealogy of the painting to the identity of the sitter, the film's principal concern is the political fate of the painting within human history.

Vreeland's *Girl in Hyacinth Blue* has a frame story that does not close. In other words, the frame provided in the first chapter in which the art teacher Richard is shown an unknown Vermeer by the math teacher Cornelius, is not closed at the end; the novel ends in 17$^{th}$ century Holland. Its first chapter has two narrators, the first-person voice of Richard, who tells about his visit to Cornelius to view the painting and learn about its acquisition (1-12 and 30-35), and an

omniscient narrator who describes Cornelius' relationship to the painting and how Cornelius' father obtained it, partly in free indirect discourse that represents Cornelius' own thoughts (12-30).

These two narrators express contradicting moral value judgments about Cornelius. The omniscient narrator sympathizes with Cornelius' identity issues after hearing about his Nazi father's looting of the painting from a Jewish family with two children, whom Cornelius' father deported to a concentration camp. The first-person narrator, Richard, is indignant and unforgiving about Cornelius' holding on to the painting in spite of his knowledge about its acquisition at the cost of human life. The reader is left suspended between these two unresolved judgments that require him or her to reflect about issues such as how far the second generation can be held responsible for the parents' deeds, if and how these deeds can be atoned for by the next generation, and what sort of atonement should be made by the son, who keeps a work of art that was his father's war booty.

Cornelius' descriptions of the painting in the first chapter tend to emphasize his extreme adoration of and devotion to the painting, and to prove its authenticity through Cornelius' detailed knowledge of Vermeer's art and technique. These depictive-interpretive ekphrases occur mainly at the beginning of the chapter, prior to the revelation about the work's acquisition. Cornelius focuses on the various details of the painting, such as the girl's eye ("like a pearl"), "the longing in her expression," the "Delft light spilling from the window", and "the grace of her hand" (4). He emphasizes that the "figures in the tapestry on the table" are the "same as in nine other paintings" (6), describes its

technique of "varying depths of field" with the help of a very detailed description and interpretation of the painting, which he compares to Vermeer's *Lacemaker* (7), and discusses the "direction of the brush's stroke" and the "overlapping layers of paint" (8). Here, his descriptions with interpretive comments are aimed at proving the work to be an authentic Vermeer.

Only one interpretive ekphrasis occurs (in the first chapter) after the reader learns about the painting's acquisition, when Cornelius decides to burn the painting to atone for his father's deed. Prior to doing so, in a two-dimensional tactile experience, he caresses the girl in the painting, touching her entire image on the canvas:

> This one last afternoon, he would allow himself a luxury he'd never permitted himself before: He touched her cheek. A quiver ran through his body as the age cracks passed beneath the pads of his fingertips. He stroked her neck and was surprised he could not grasp the tie string handing from her cap. And then her shoulder, and he was astonished he could not feel its roundness. She hardly had breasts. He moistened his lips suddenly gone dry, and touched there too, more delicately, two fingers only […] (25).

His love for this painting has become a substitute for human love. In short, his is an aesthetic as well as an erotic appreciation of the painting, an expression of his intense personal desire for the work evoked by the sublime artistic quality of the painting. This interpretive ekphrasis thus almost becomes a dramatic one when Cornelius experiences this work almost as a living being if it weren't for his touch. Implicitly, such a response argues for the painting's power and authenticity.

The subsequent chapters provide the painting's pedigree, from the Jewish family in the early 1940s to Vermeer's creation in the 17$^{th}$ century, ending shortly

thereafter at an auction of that painting at which Vermeer's second eldest daughter Magdalena, the model for that painting but now a married woman, is present. Most of these chapters are told by an omniscient narrator. "Hyacinth Blues" and "From the Personal Papers of Adriaan Kuypers," are the only stories told in the first person (by a female and a male protagonist respectively). In five out of seven of the novel's stories, the protagonist whose relationship to the painting is the focus of the chapter, is female: the little Jewish girl Hannah in "A Night Different From All Other Nights", the first-person narrator in the chapter "Hyacinth Blues," Saskia, the farmer's wife in "Morningshine," the servant girl and social outcast Aletta Pieters in "From the Personal Papers of Adriaan Kuypers," and Vermeer's daughter Magdalena in the chapter "Magdalena Looking." Moreover, most of the protagonists are poor and from the lower social classes. Art functions here as a means of imbuing their poor, often oppressed lives with meaning, or illuminating their inner life. At the same time it also acts as anchor for their identity in moments of personal or social predicaments or interpersonal strife. In short, these stories underscore the intense personal function of art for each of their protagonists.

Brent Shield's film *Brush with Fate* not only changes the gender of the painting's owner from male to female, turning Cornelius into a Cornelia, but it also makes her the narrator of all subsequent stories (deleting one of the novel's two stories told in the first person, "Hyacinth Blues"). Furthermore, the first chapter is split and becomes a frame that closes at the end of the film, lending the frame story weight at the expense of the female voices in the stories. In addition,

the frame story is told completely from Richard's perspective, thus deleting the sympathetic, omniscient narrator and Cornelia's free indirect discourse. In so doing, as well as by representing her as strange and eccentric, the film discredits Cornelia as possibly unreliable narrator. Not only does Richard's skeptical point of view thus frame Cornelia's stories, but furthermore, his male voice of reason prevails over her impassioned, stereotypically female behavior, and remains to tell the truth after she has disappeared from the story.

The change of narrative stances also affects the function of art in the film. The novel's near-erotic relationship between Cornelius and the girl in the painting shifts in the film to a suppressed erotic relationship between Cornelia and Richard. After "years of research and single-minded devotion" which "required nothing less than a life-time […], a life" and which she tells Richard means "love," she had hoped to find in Richard "someone capable of appreciating" and of sharing her burden as well as her love. Richard remains dispassionate and distanced throughout, and is appalled at the revelation of her father's deed and Cornelia's complicity in keeping the painting. Her disappointment in him is such that it leads her to attempt to burn the painting (which in the novel had occurred prior to their encounter), and to disappear with the painting and her father (who in the novel is already dead). In short, whereas the novel depicts a sensuous and emotionally charged relationship of a male Cornelius to the girl in the painting, the film emphasizes a female Cornelia's desire for human love in the aftermath of a life devoted solely to the work of art and to keeping its dire secret.

Likewise, the two central ekphrastic moments in the film point to an important difference between novel and film. When Cornelia first shows Richard the painting, she is almost moved to tears at its beauty, as if she had never seen it before: "Look at her eye, like a pearl. The longing in her expression. The Delft light spilling onto her. And look, see here, the grace of her hand. Idle, palms up." And she continues, when Richard expresses his disbelief in its authenticity: "Look, look at the window cast, smooth as liquid light, and look, look at the basket. Tiny grooves of brushstrokes creating the textures in the reed. That's Vermeer." Yet, the camera focuses on her face, on her gestures of love and devotion, rather than on the painting, which is not shown during this depictive ekphrasis, thus emphasizing her own longing for love and affection.

The second longer depictive ekphrastic moment in the film occurs in the scene in which her father loots the painting.[214] Sitting at a table under which the young Jewish boy is hiding, he contemplates it for a long time, musing: "Is this possible then. The Delft light, lion-head finials on the chairs, and […] the tapestry on the table. All Vermeer." While gently holding the painting, still with an admiring look on his face, and in the same breath and tone, he tells the boy to come out under the table. Thus simultaneously deporting the boy to the concentration camp trains and taking the painting as booty, his ekphrasis is tied to his double war crime. Furthermore, while he muses about the painting, the scene jump cuts between a focus on the painting, the SS officer, and the Jewish boy,

[214] There are three other, very brief ekphrases in the other stories: the girl Tanneke in the first story identifies with the girl's expression of longing and love while waiting for her lover, the art collector to whom Saskia sells the painting makes some brief admiring comments about its technique, and the servant girl Aletta uses it as a foil to her own existence, as symbol of unreachable happiness.

suggesting to the viewer that aesthetic appreciation and inhuman behavior can go hand in hand.

In the novel, this same story is part of the introductory chapter, told by the omniscient narrator. From this point, the stories unfold in reverse chronology, culminating with the picture's origins and its model Magdalena. By making this scene the final flash-back in the film, the director turns the frame story into a conclusion. Going backwards chronologically but returning to the story of the Jewish family at the very end, the film splits the first chapter by having the frame narrative occur at the beginning as well as the end of the film, and the story of the looting, told in the first chapter of the novel, at the end.

In the novel, the search for the origin or identity of the girl in the painting ends with her story and relationship to "her" painting, thereby indicating the process of art transformed into and reflecting on life. The film, by contrast, ends its flashback stories with the deportation of the Jewish family and the looting of the painting, thus emphasizing how art is enmeshed in socio-political reality. Closing with a camera shot of the empty spot where the painting had hung in Cornelia's former house (which Richard is now being offered as faculty housing), the film underscores its absence and the severance between art and life as the painting is no longer part of human history. In short, while the novel emphasizes art as part of human life, the change of chronology in the film and the different functions of the ekphrases not only foreground the fate of the Jewish family rather than that of the original model for and creation of the painting, it also underscores

the role and function of art in human socio-political history, and the disjunction between art and humanity.

## CONCLUSION

The different foci of these two films and novels point to the two aspects of Vermeer's work that Wolf has identified in some of Vermeer's "mid-career images of individual women absorbed in private tasks" (Wolf 173). While the two films focus on "the social or political dimension of personal life," that is, on class relations, political history, and social, economical and gender-related issues of power, the novels focus on the "second task" that these images accomplish, that of representing "figures whose self-absorption parallels that of the painting itself" (ibid.). But in foregrounding the self-reflexive aesthetic dimension of Vermeer's work, the two novels also use art and ekphrasis to empower their female characters.

Vermeer's painting of the *Girl with a Pearl Earring* emphasizes the girl's ambiguous status through the exotic costume and the absence of clear class markers. Chevalier's novel and Webber's film do ascribe a specific social class to the girl, thereby reintroducing the class markers absent in the painting, and unveiling the costume. Yet, in exposing her rich, aesthetically sensitive inner life particularly through her interpretive ekphrases, the novel also allows Griet to transcend those class boundaries, emphasizing her ambiguous status just as Vermeer's painting does. Especially in contrast to Vermeer's uncomprehending, insensitive and bland wife Catharina, Griet's keen artistic sensibilities render

credible to the reader the resulting development of an internal transcendence of her public, social status as a servant. Because the film decreases the focus on Griet's aesthetic understanding by deleting her interpretive ekphrases, it de-emphasizes this evolving, very private consciousness and hence the ambiguous status of Vermeer's painted girl.

Likewise, in the novel it is Griet's perspective, her perception, through which readers experience not only the story, but almost all art works. In fact, in Vermeer's house, she is the only one apart from Maria Thins who contemplates the artist's works. Particularly her ekphrases portray Griet as an actively seeing (and speaking) subject. Her personal as well as abstract-aesthetic responses to Vermeer's works reveal not only Griet's identification with the inwardness and autonomy of the women represented, but moreover, in the process she herself is transformed into a more self-confident and independent, emancipated young woman. Like Vermeer's canvas, then, in granting her the power of ekphrasis, that is, the power of both the gaze and the word, the novel represents the *Girl with a Pearl Earring* as embodying perception.

The film, however, by reducing the girl's ekphrastic agency, transforms Griet back into seen object and more passive observer. Diminishing the double ekphrasis of the novel (that is, the girl of the painting *Girl with a Pearl Earring* reflecting on other paintings by Vermeer), the film all but erases the verbal and visual power Griet conveys in the novel, as well as the defiance and self-affirmation of the girl Vermeer painted. In so doing, the film exchanges the interpretation of the painting as embodying perception in favor of one

representing class tensions. This divergent focus is also mirrored in the different types of ekphrases of *Woman with a Pearl Necklace* appearing in the novel and the film. In the novel Griet's reflections and observations about Vermeer's art underscore her inwardness as well as her aesthetic concerns. In the film, Van Ruijven's commentary on the picture places it back in the tradition of the profile portrait, demonstrating male power and capital, and transforming the picture as well as the woman into "objects of exchange" and "figures of spiritual value and intangible worth" (Wolf 178).[215]

However, by thus underscoring the tensions of class and gender, Webber's film takes up and intensifies, perhaps one could say contemporizes, crucial issues in Vermeer's works. For example, the film reinterprets the ambiguity of Vermeer's *Girl with a Pearl Earring* as representing, among other things, unresolved class tensions that are also present in other works (such as *Mistress and Maid*, the *Love Letter*, etc.). In contrast to the novel, Webber is interested in highlighting not the complicity but the clash between classes and genders. The film thus attempts to build up on and perhaps correct Vermeer by revealing a possible before and after of the moments depicted in his works, thereby showing that transcending class boundaries in a class-oriented society can only be momentary and transient. While Webber is skeptical of the power of art as a

[215] Wolf has interpreted *Woman with a Pearl Necklace* as an image about seeing which repudiates the tradition of the profile portrait. It is through the bare wall behind her and the mirror into which she gazes that the painting differs from that tradition, while foregrounding the theme of reflection and self-reflection. Likewise, in positioning the chair at a 90-degree angle to the table, thus affording a vantage point that the initial viewer lacks, the painting "sets the viewer at odds with himself" and requires us to "rethink the terms of our own perception" (181). The painting thus becomes self-reflexive and self-referential as "the woman's self-absorption parallels that of the work of art and our position as viewers affirms her autonomy by underscoring our separation from her" (ibid.).

means of breaking through social norms, he does instead propose erotic attraction as a more significant factor. This shift, aimed at lending the film greater popular appeal and market value, further corroborates Webber's interpretation of social values.

Similarly, Shield's film *Brush with Fate* shifts the novel's focus on personal aesthetic concerns and on female self-realization to socio-political issues and male power. Concluding with the story of the picture's creation from the point of view of its original model and of her relationship to the painting, the novel ends by transforming the female object of the painting into its subject, into active viewer and empowered voice. Reflecting on her painting, Magdalena emphasizes her own powerful gaze: "Almost a child she was, its seemed to her, *gazing* out of the window instead of doing her mending, as if by the mere act of *looking* she could send her spirit out into the world" (239; my italics). Her unfulfilled wish "to tell a truth in art" (238) thus comes true. Through her portrait, she does indeed tell a truth in art. Moreover, it is in this final chapter of the novel that the process of creation is described at length, in an interpretive ekphrasis in free indirect discourse from her perspective (231-33), after the initial inspiration to it had been described at the end of the previous chapter from Vermeer's perspective in free indirect discourse (221-23).

In contrast, in the film, the scene entitled "Magdalena looking" focuses on her inability to bring her truth across to the people in the auction hall where the painting is being sold. A quaint old lady, she attempts repeatedly to tell the auctioneer, who has attributed the painting to Frans Hals, that it is indeed a

Vermeer and that the name of the girl in the painting is Magdalena, yet no one takes her seriously. Thus silenced by disbelief, her voice as well as her perspective is discredited. Her fate thus provides a parallel to that of Cornelia, who not only disappears at the end of the film, vanished just like the picture itself, but moreover, is displaced by the male voice of Richard, obliterating her and the picture through his disbelief in the painting and his condemnation of Cornelia's decision to keep the work.

However, the film also has another counterpart to the novel chapter "Magdalena looking" in which the girl describes the creation of her painting. In the film, the viewer sees this creation in a brief tableau vivant, or an interpretive ekphrasis. Due to its mostly visual nature, as opposed to the verbal accounts in the novel, this scene is functionally different in the film. In the novel, this scene is recounted entirely from Magdalena's point of view, her voice and her perspective, thus giving her the status of being herself an active, creating subject. In the film, by contrast, this scene objectifies her yet more, transforming her into a passive, seen object of both the camera and Vermeer's gaze by changing the perspective and foregoing the girl's reflections.

Furthermore, a subtle yet significant difference in the depiction of the painting itself in the film and the novel points to the different foci of the two media. The chapter "Magdalena Looking" in the novel emphasizes the presence of a sewing basket and of the girl's interruption of her sewing: "He drew her over to the table by the window, brought the sewing basket, placed on her lap her brother's shirt that needed buttons… 'If you sit here mending, I will paint you,

Magdalena […] For days she sat there, still as she could for Father, and yet sewing a few stitches every so often to satisfy Mother" (231-32). Thus, the novel obliquely alludes to another Vermeer, *The Lacemaker* (ca. 1669-70), a similarity which Cornelius had already emphasized in the first chapter (7), and which emphasizes the parallel between the artistic occupation of the girl and that of the painter, who both work with their hands. In the film, this basket is full of fresh bread, rather than sewing items.[216] This change is significant because it is clearly not media-related. Given the detailed description in the novel, the painting made for the film could have been easily constructed to correspond to that description. The fact that is does not do so indicates the different agenda of the filmmaker and his team. This change, then, creates an image of upper class leisure and complete absence of needs, worries or household tasks that contrasts with the life of its sitter as well as with most of its subsequent owners, and thus contributes to the film's focus on class and gender politics. Novel and film, in short, transmedialize different aspects of Vermeer's work, while being equally faithful to it.

But why do these films foreground social and political issues, rather than the personal, aesthetic ones of the novel? I suggest this shift in focus has to do with self-reflexivity in the filmic discourse. Whereas the reception of novels such as Chevalier's and Vreeland's is also a more private, aesthetic experience, films and their reception are social, public ones that are closely connected to economics, marketing, star appeal, and public reviews and ratings. By using ekphrasis to emphasize issues of power and dominance, the films not only expose

[216] There are two other slight differences in this painting created for the film by Jonathan Janson: in the film's painting, the girl is not wearing a "cap" with a "lace edge," nor is there a "glass of milk" on the table, but a large white jar.

economic and gender structures in their story, but also reflect on the social status of art (including film) and its connection to money and power. This different use of ekphrasis in the novels and the films, then, provides insight into the treatment of gender in the different media. In spite of the female emancipation in the novels, filmic ekphrasis turns women back into objects rather than subjects. By canceling out the female ekphrases, the films reproduce traditional identification patterns in movies as well as in traditional ekphrasis, where women and pictorial images are silent objects to be looked at by the male subject.

Thus for example in the camera obscura scene in the novel and the film *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, which epitomizes structures of looking and functions as a *mise-en-abyme* for the reader. In the novel, the reader observes Vermeer looking at Griet looking at the painting through the camera obscura. But when Vermeer's gaze inhibits Griet and she sends him out, the novel underscores not only the gender tensions but also the emancipation of the female gaze, and effectively cancels out the inhibiting male gaze.

In the film, by contrast, the scene is transformed into a *mise en abyme* for the movie theater and filmic ekphrasis. In fact, the camera obscura, so central to both the novel and the film *Girl with a Pear Earring*, can be seen as a metaphor for filmic ekphrasis. Like the camera obscura, filmic ekphrasis also shows a "painting that [is] not a painting," in other words, it is also a mechanical illusion of a pictorial illusion. Both are technological devices that show the viewer an image of an image and in so doing, reveal the original picture from a different perspective (the camera obscura literally turns things upside down and reverses

left and right). They are thus devices by which the viewers (painter, filmmaker, or filmic audience) can distance themselves from the original art work and instead contemplate its image. In Chevalier's novel, Vermeer explains his reason for using the camera obscura to Griet thus: "I use it to help me to see in a different way – to see more of what is there" (Chevalier 60). Similarly, although filmic ekphrasis does not reverse the image, it does put it in a new context and medium. What the camera obscura does by reversing the image, film can do by animating and enacting it. Furthermore, both the camera obscura and the film must be projected in a dark room in order to bring out the image sharply. As Amos Vogel has noted,

> [t]he film experience requires total darkness; the viewer must not be distracted from the bright rectangle from which huge shapes impinge on him. Unlike the low-pressure television experience (during which the viewer remains aware of room environment and other people, aided by appropriately named 'breaks'), the film experience is total, isolating, hallucinatory.[217]

Vermeer and Griet contemplating the image in the darkness under his robe thus parallel the movie theater audience. In both cases, the viewers are isolated from and unaware of the rest of the room, and exclusively focus on the image. Likewise, the darkness of a movie theater as well as of this camera obscura experience, instead of isolating unites the two, unites them like lovers in a movie theater, protected by the intimacy of darkness. Moreover, this scene re-inscribes the gender hierarchies when Vermeer looks at Griet looking at the image. Unlike in the novel, then, Griet in the film is vulnerable and subject to the male gaze.

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[217] Amos Vogel, *Film as Subversive Art* (New York Random House, 1974) 9.

In short, these two novels foreground female ekphrasis, the female voice, perspective and perception in order to affirm these women's autonomy, self-realization, and non-commodity status. The films, on the other hand, shift the focus to male voices and use the paintings to bring out the social issues involved in Vermeer's art, negotiating the relationship between aesthetic representation and real-world power, between silence and speech.

# Chapter 7: Conclusion:
# The Cerebral and the Affective Function of Ekphrasis

## INTRODUCTION

My aim in this dissertation has been to expand the scope of ekphrasis and to demonstrate the usefulness of reading film in the light of the aesthetic systems provided by both literary ekphrasis and art history. Thus, I have argued that the ancient literary device of ekphrasis is applicable to film as well and can serve to better understand film's understanding of itself as hybrid medium, situated between narrative and dramatic texts and the visual arts, but also incorporating musical elements.[218] My dissertation thus demonstrates that the disciplinary boundaries between literary studies, film studies and art history are steadily eroding.

My comparison of literary and cinematic ekphrasis in four chapters dealing with three different painters is based on the premise that such a comparison will highlight not only the extent to which cinematic ekphrasis is possible and comparable to ekphrasis in literary texts, but also the ways in which filmic ekphrasis differs from the literary tradition and marks its own space. Thus, while I have argued that there is no essential difference between literary and filmic ekphrasis, as they can use the same ekphrastic categories with similar goals, I have also shown that cinematic ekphrasis, in the cases of film adaptations,

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[218] I am drawing here on James Monaco's "Spectrum of Abstraction" of the arts, ranging from practical to musical. See *How to Read a Film: Moview, Media, Multimedia.* 3rd ed. (New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000) 28.

may compete with both the visual arts and the literary text, thus expanding the *paragone* to a triad of competing media. In other words, cinematic ekphrasis explodes the binary relationship between visual vs. verbal discourses. Instead of simply setting one against the other and overturning the verbal through the visual, cinematic ekphrasis makes the relationship a triadic one between verbal, visual and filmic elements. In so doing, film uses ekphrasis to define itself, to foreground and distinguish the "cinematic" nature of its discourse from both the literary and the purely visual discourses. As Susan Felleman has emphasized,

> When a film undertakes the representation of 'art' as a theme or engages an artwork as motif, it is, whatever else it is doing, also more or less openly and more or less knowingly entering into a contemplation of its own nature and at some level positing its own unwritten theory of cinema as art.[219]

## THE DISCOURSES OF CINEMATIC EKPHRASIS

I have analyzed both texts and films that transmedialize an image in the same ekphrastic category (chapter three), as well as film adaptations of literary ekphrases (chapters four and six), and a screenplay-film relationship (chapter five), both of which change the category of ekphrastic transmedialization.

My first analysis (chapter three) is the first of two chapters focusing on the transmedialization of Goya's *Capricho* 43, *El sueño de la razón produce monstruos*, in a poem by Günter Kunert, a drama by Antionio Buero Vallejo, and a film by Carlos Saura. All three texts dramatize that aquatint by paralleling a scene of personal assault on the artist by demonic creatures from his imagination

[219] Susan Felleman, *Art in the Cinematic Imagination* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006) 2.

with a scene of real, political attack by external demons that afflict not only the artist, but society at large. In so doing, these texts create their own "caprichos" in competition with those of Goya, and as a reflection of their criticism of their own contemporary society. This use of what I call dramatic ekphrasis thus characterizes the writers' and filmmaker's attitude toward the function and responsibility of the artist in society. Using the *Sleep of Reason* as image to be overcome by one of awakening of reason, they emphasize the need for political awakening and social justice through the use of reason and enlightenment.

In chapter four, another chapter on Goya's *Sleep of Reason*, I discuss Konrad Wolf's film adaptation of Lion Feuchtwanger's novel *Goya oder der arge Weg der Erkenntnis*. Whereas the novel uses interpretive ekphrases of Goya's *Sleep of Reason* in order to portray its private-aesthetic meaning for the artist, the film uses dramatic ekphrases of that aquatint in order to depict its socio-political implications. However, in all of these texts in both Goya chapters, there is a similar pattern of wavering between audience identification and distance to the protagonist. This device provokes more active participation and involvement of the reader and viewer, who has to negotiate his or her position with the text and his attitude toward the protagonist. These two Goya chapters illustrate examples of the dramatic category in filmic ekphrasis, which in both cases underscore the art work's socio-political dimension.

In chapter five I analyze the transmedialization of Rembrandt's self portraits in Alexander Korda's film and Carl Zuckmayer's screenplay. Here, ekphrasis functions as mirror of Rembrandts own conscious shaping and

promotion of his public image through his self portraits. The film and the screenplay take up the challenge to reinstate that image and also create their own "Rembrandt" through cinematic, interpretive ekphrases that compete with the artist's own self portraits. Although the screenplay has largely attributive ekphrases, their concretization by the reader of the screenplay or by the film itself turns them into interpretive ekphrases that underscore the gap between representation and reality.

Chapter six discusses again two cases of film adaptations in which not only the ekphrastic categories, but also the interpretation and function of the art works change. Whereas the novels about Vermeer focus on the female perspective and the women's aesthetic experiences of his art works in predominantly interpretive ekphrases, the films' predominantly depictive ekphrases revert to the traditional male point of view and the connection of art to economic and social power.

The ekphrastic category in which the image is transmedialized thus has an effect on the interpretation of the image: Different ekphrastic categories lead to different interpretations. Moreover, only in the chapters focusing on film adaptations are there not only different ekphrastic categories in the texts and films, but also largely different interpretations of the images. In other words, while film, poem, drama and screenplay use ekphrasis in similar ways, focusing on socio-political issues and the relationship between art and society, the novels tend to use ekphrasis to underscore personal, aesthetic, and feminist issues. As I have indicated, this difference can be connected to the different kinds of

mediation processes of films and novels. The films' connection of art with the social, public sphere reflects on the public mass consumption of film in movie theaters or rental stores. Conversely, those particular novels' association of art with privacy, intimacy and aesthetic experience reflects on the private practice of reading and aesthetic pleasure. In other words, the use of ekphrasis here reflects on the media's own respective reception practices.

However, because of the visual-auditory component of cinematic ekphrasis, these four categories (attributive, depictive, interpretive, dramatic) have, in cinematic ekphrasis, two difference audience-related functions that they do not have in the literary genres. While the attributive and depictive categories are primarily cerebral, the interpretive and the dramatic categories are primarily affective.

The first two challenge the audience to participate in making a conscious connection between the interpretation of the art work and the film scene in which it appears. That is, these two types of ekphrasis lay themselves bare as devices by which the cinematic discourse requires active audience participation, challenging the audience to rethink the work of art in the context of the film. In attributive ekphrasis, it does so by using the artwork in a supporting function that "updates" traditional interpretations. In the depictive category, the film makes the audience reconsider the art work though the connection between camera focus, camera movement and close-up detail shots on the one hand, and the dialog or audio sound-track accompanying these visuals on the other. This is the case, for

example, in the film *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, in which the depictive ekphrases point to the unresolved gender tensions in Vermeer's work

While these two categories can be called cerebral in their effect on the audience, as they ask the audience to rethink their interpretation of the work of art, the interpretive and dramatic categories can be considered affective, because they seduce the audience to their point of view. In these two categories, ekphrasis is more subtle and requires more audience participation. More than in the first two categories, ekphrasis here depends primarily on its recognition by the audience and thus on the audience's familiarity with the works of art in question. However, the filmic discourse in interpretive and dramatic ekphrasis appropriates the art works to such a degree that it does not raise awareness of its status as ekphrasis, that is, as cinematic discourse about art. On the contrary, the paintings in these categories become part of the filmic discourse to such an extent that they become players an plot elements, thereby losing their status as paintings, which they still retain in the attributive or depictive category because they are treated there as works of art. André Bazin has criticized this type of films in his essay "Painting and Cinema" by claiming that the filmic frame is centrifugal while the picture frame is centripetal. Thus, in Bazin's words, "if we show a section of a painting on a screen, the space of the painting loses its orientation and limits and is presented to imagination as without any boundaries. […] [T]he painting thus takes on the spatial properties of cinema […]" (166). While paintings in the attributive and depictive categories are not taken out of their frame, and thus retain their own spatial properties, the interpretive and dramatic categories de-polarize the space of

the painting outwards by animating them, by giving them voice and movement, and by adding a soundtrack as an acoustic context. In so doing, these two categories seduce the audiences to their point of view through the visual-verbal-auditory impact of the ekphrasis. In the interpretive category, this seduction tends to be aesthetic, such as the de- and re-constructive aesthetics in Korda's *Rembrandt*, which de- and re-constructs self-portraiture of the film for the viewer. In the dramatic category, on the other hand, the seduction tends to be socio-political, as for example in the two Goya films which foreground the political interpretation of the *Sueño de la razón* and use it to emphasize the artist's political commitment and involvement.

Future studies could investigate if and how the paragone and the audience-function of films about modern art and artists change. How do films transmedialize abstract art such as Modigliani's, that of the graffiti artist Basquiat, or of the fictional artist in Rivette's *Belle noiseuse*? Given the fact that strictly speaking, a dramatization of the paintings will no longer be possible with abstract art, do these films develop different types of ekphrasis and different types of audience-functions? Especially in the case of the *Belle noiseuse*, the dramatization of the work of art is replaced by a dramatization of the creation process. Thus, while the category of dramatic ekphrasis still applies, its audience function is likely to change, as the audience participates more directly in the filmic (re-) creation of the work of art.

## PARAGONE

But why do the ekphrastic categories and the interpretation of the works of art change in these film adaptations, whereas the ekphrases in unrelated texts and films about the same art works is more likely to be the same or similar? I believe this is due to film's competition not only with the painting, but also the novel, using ekphrasis to underscore its creative independence from both art and literature. Filmic ekphrasis thus rewrites the Horatian phrase *Ut pictura poesis* as both *Ut pictura cinema* and *Ut novella cinema*.

By deliberately creating its own ekphrases independent and different from those of the novel, often both in terms of ekphrastic category and point of view, visual, cinematic ekphrasis underscores its ability to surpass the purely verbal ekphrasis of the novel. Many of the movie scenes analyzed in the previous chapters in fact forego verbal aspects, or foreground other auditory but non-verbal elements such as background noise (for example, the inquisition interview in Wolf's *Goya*) or music (for example, the dream scene in which the paintings come to life in Saura's *Goya*).

Moreover, cinematic ekphrasis also enters into a different kind of competition with the original image than any verbal ekphrasis can. By producing a filmic counter-image to the original work of art, movies produce their own images that exist in time and space, that can "speak" and are further enhanced by other auditory means. In spite of the visual nature of filmic ekphrasis, it thus still depends on *enargeia*, that is, on the audience's mental recreation of the work of art, and on the viewer's assimilation and synthesizing of the filmic image and the

real painting. Just like literary ekphrasis, cinematic ekphrasis depends on its effect on and the participation of the audience who must reconstruct, compare, and synthesize the images.

The paragone, then, intensifies in cinematic ekphrasis because film enacts not only the competition between words and images, but also that between pictorial and cinematic images, and, in the case of film adaptations, between cinematic and literary transmedialization of art. For example, in Korda's *Rembrandt*, the interpretive ekphrases of Rembrandt's self portraits are largely visual ekphrases while Laughton's simultaneous speeches or the dialogs in most cases (except for the final scene) do not evoke an ekphrasis at all. Thus, the film not only emphasizes the power of visual, filmic ekphrasis which does not need to rely on words, but also the simultaneous competition between the filmic recreations of Rembrandt's self portraits and the artist's real works.

Moreover, as the four ekphrastic categories become progressively self-reflective and independent, the paragone also increases. In dramatic ekphrasis, film can completely assimilate the original work of art and turn it into a cinematic scene or even sequence, all but deleting the image's original status and context. Ekphrasis can thus function as a useful tool for analyzing many of the issues at heart in the relationship between words and images, which are central to the filmic discourse and the hybrid nature of the cinematic medium. By bringing into interaction and competition the visual, verbal, and auditory elements of the filmic discourse, cinematic ekphrasis highlights and enacts film's struggle to be accepted as art form among the other arts, such as literature, painting, and music.

Since its invention, film has been in competition with the other arts, and especially painting.[220] Even though film had from the beginning a mimetic advantage over painting due to its ability to directly represent images of the world on screen, film could not compete with painting on the purely visual level until the late 1960s, when film color became sophisticated enough to become competitive (Monaco 39). Moreover, many filmmakers were painters before they became filmmakers (for example, to name but a few, Derek Jarman, Agnes Merlet, Maurice Pialat, and Peter Greenaway). Other filmmakers, such as Carlos Saura and Alexander Korda, have brothers who are painters. In all these cases, the paragonic aspect of their films is intensified through that connection. Those filmmakers who could not or did not become painters are now able to dominate art in their new medium, film, or film may become the site of the contest between the brothers.

Moreover, films about painters and paintings are becoming increasingly frequent. In the outline of my methodology I have already referred to filmmakers such as Jean-Luc Godard and Peter Greenaway. Both use art in most of their movies, resulting in painterly films that are highly ekphrastic, and their use of lightning and camera framing often demands that one read individual film frames as paintings. Godard's film *Passion*, moreover, is a film about the filming of an entirely ekphrastic film, in which a filmmaker films a series of *tableaux vivants* of famous paintings. Likewise, Peter Greenaway is currently in the process of

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[220] See André Bazin, "Painting and Cinema," What is Cinema? Trans. by Hugh Gray (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1967) 164-72, and Martin Norden, "Film and Painting," *Film and the Arts in Symbiosis: A Resource Guide*, ed. Gary R. Edgerton (New York, Westport, and London: Greenwood Press, 1988) 17-46, esp. 18-23.

making a film that is ekphrastic in its entirety: His *Nightwatching*, scheduled for 2007, promises a new interpretation of Rembrandt's famous *Nightwatch*, and the film as a whole dramatizes not only the painting and its circumstances of creation, but also a whole range of other paintings by Rembrandt as well as by various other painters, resulting in multiple layers of ekphrasis within ekphrasis.

Greenaway reads the painting as "a demonstration of murder with the murderers all picked out in detail," as a "forensic enquiry in paint, [a] Crime Scene Investigation."[221] In Greenaway's film, then, film becomes art history through the use of visual-verbal-auditory ekphrasis. Moreover, in his introduction in the screenplay of this film, Greenaway makes it clear that his film is meant as challenge to art historians, and likely to offend the "overwise academics" and "those who preen their relationship with the great painter in too many uncritical, unqualified, sycophantic metaphors" (ibid). In short, Greenaway sets this film up as paragone with art historians; that is, with traditional ekphrastic writings about art, emphasizing that his film is, like art historical writings, directed at and in dialog with other critics, demanding to be taken seriously as ekphrasis. Moreover, Greenaway's film underscores again the need to bridge the gap between academic disciplines. By directing his film explicitly to art historians, Greenaway attempts to end what Dalle Vacche has described as art historians' indifference toward film.[222] Unlike Korda's earlier biographical Rembrandt film form 1936, then, the paragone here becomes two-dimensional, directed at the painter as well as at

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[221] Peter Greenaway, *Nightwatching* (Paris: Dis Voir, 2006) 3.
[222] Angela Dalle Vacche, "Introduction: Unexplored Connections in a New Territory, " *The Visual Turn: Classical Film Theory and Art History* (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Rutgers UP, 2003) 14.

contemporary art historians. By foregrounding its dual status as artwork in its own right as well as art historical criticism, this film no longer uses ekphrasis in order to find its place among the arts, but to be recognized as valid critical discourse about another art.

But why has ekphrasis so far not been applied to film? To what is this gap due, and why is it important to be filled? I believe the absence of ekphrasis from discussions of films about art has to do with the critical divide between high culture and its focus on literary and aesthetic phenomena on the one hand, and popular culture and its focus on political and ideological interpretations on the other. In other words, on the one hand, for critics of ekphrasis, film's status as low art or pop culture disqualifies it from being ekphrastic. On the other hand, for critics of film and pop culture, ekphrasis is too aesthetic a phenomenon to be of use to their critical inquiry. However, as the analyses in the previous chapters have shown, ekphrasis is a useful tool for exploring both aesthetic concerns and ideological issues in film. Moreover, reading film in the context of ekphrasis also gives us direct access to film's ongoing struggle to stand on its own and to be accepted not only as art form alongside, but independent of, painting and the novel, but perhaps also as art historical criticism.

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## Filmography

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# Vita

Laura Mareike Sager was born in Hamburg, Germany on February 10, 1978 to Dr. Peter Sager and Else-Maria Sager. She graduated from the Albert-Schweitzer Gymnasium in Hamburg in 1997 and received a B.A. from the Universität Hamburg in 2000 and spent a semester abroad at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid (Spain). She received an M.A. from the University of Texas at Austin in Comparative Literature in 2003 with a thesis on "Poetry of German Expressionism and the Spanish Avant-garde: Re-contextualizing García Lorca's *Poeta en Nueva York,*" a revised version of which was published in the *Revista de Estudios Hispanicos* in the same year. She has also published an article in the *German Quarterly* on "German Unification: Concepts of Identity in Poetry from the East and West." She has taught German at the University of Texas since 2003, and German and Spanish at the University of Dallas since 2006.

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